THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE HERO IN ENGLISH DRAMA TO 1613: TECHNIQUES IN CHARACTERIZATION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

by

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APRIL 16, 1962

ABSTRACT

It is possible to gain an insight into the development of the English drama between its beginnings and Shakespeare's death through a study of the approaches of successive dramatists to the problem of characterizing the hero. Between the simple self-introduction of the folk-play hero and the artistic presentation of Hamlet or Othello lies more than a century of experiment and innovation. During this period, the leading figures of plays came to be human beings, rather than saints, personified abstractions, or types. In this thesis, techniques of hero-characterization are traced throughout the period studied, and shown against the background of audience knowledge, attitudes, and tastes. The thesis shows that "progress" in dramatic technique was not steady and uninterrupted. It is also seen that while Shakespeare, in this aspect of playwriting as much as in others, usually works with traditional materials and techniques, he often gives these techniques new and interesting variations.

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INTRODUCTION

My subject in this thesis is techniques of hero-presentation in English drama from its beginnings to 1613, the year which marks the end of Shakespeare's dramatic career.

As the drama developed from naive beginnings to the suggestiveness of the opening scene of Hamlet, old techniques for the presentation of the hero were refined, new ones invented, and between the simple self-introduction of the folk-play hero and the thoughtful, many-sided presentation of Hamlet or Othello lies more than a century of experimentation and innovation. I have examined the techniques of hero characterization which are to be found in the extant plays of the period, and have attempted to show those plays in which innovations and experiments were made.

It seems to be a legitimate assumption that a dramatist of any ability expends a great deal of thought upon the early characterization of his hero, and an insight into the evolution of English drama as a whole in the period surveyed may be gained from a study of this subject.

Because the subject is a large one, and because the dramatist's task of characterizing his hero must be accomplished early in the play, I have confined myself to the first acts of the plays examined. Although my discussion deals with "first acts," many of the plays studied were not given act and scene divisions by their authors. I accept the divisions imposed upon plays of the professional period

by responsible editors, but the religious and moral plays of an earlier date present a different problem. A mystery cycle is, on the one hand, a long play with its climax in the Passion of Christ, and, on the other hand, a series of short dramatised episodes from the Bible, each with its own leading figure, such as Moses, Abraham, or John the Baptist. I propose to treat these cycles both as long plays whose hero is Christ and also, where it seems logical and pertinent, to discuss how the chief figures of particular episodes are built up. When dealing with moralities and miracle plays I consider the "first act" as that part of the play which leads up to and includes the entrance of the "hero" or shows the first phase of the action.

Chapter I

THE AUDIENCE, WHAT IT KNEW AND LIKED

(1) The Mediaeval and Elizabethan Audiences' Knowledge of Scripture and Legend.

Because the drama is an art which depends upon popular reception, no dramatist can be successful who writes too far above the mental capacities of his audience. Every good dramatist at least begins to write his play with his audience in mind, for whether plays are staged for didactic purposes, like the mysteries, or for profit, like Shakespeare's dramas and many of the folk-plays, they fail to accomplish their purpose if concepts and terms are introduced which the audience does not understand. What could English dramatists, when they came to select and present heroes, count upon their audiences to know and to feel?

The mediaeval man had a great capacity for hero-worship. The people of an age which delighted in story-telling naturally knew many legends and great names. Chaucer's Pardoner makes a shrewd assessment of the case when he comments that "Lewed people loven tales olde; Swich things can they wel reporte and holde,"[1] and goes on to stud his own story with great and obviously familiar names from the Bible, history, and legend. The whole world of legend and romance lay open to even the simplest Englishman of the Middle Ages,

whose imagination was stirred at his own fireside by tales of the exploits of great heroes. Domestic story-telling of this kind was supplemented, according to G.R. Owst, by tales told from the pulpit itself, for the mediaeval preacher's net was cast very wide in his search for illustrations and examples, so that Sir Guy of Warwick, Roland of Rouncesvalles, and Charlemagne might live again for homiletic purposes in the course of a church service.[2] As one homilist put it: "Many men deliten moche to heren of other mennys famous dedes; and the more worthi that such dedes ben, the more men profiten by such ensaumples."[3] It is small wonder that veneration of that great national hero, Saint George, grew to such proportions that his day, April 23, was declared a public holiday in 1222, for the natural tendency toward hero-worship had plenty of encouragement. Any playwright composing an entertainment based upon Saint George's exploits was assured of an interested hearing. So with plays dealing with King Alfred, with that local hero Robin Hood, and with, likely enough, many another hero whose appearance in folk-plays cannot be verified by surviving works. The important point is that the earliest English playwrights, whether minstrels or local "amateur" authors, could count upon their audiences to recognize and accept these already familiar figures. The folk dramatist found his heroes ready made.

Since the primary duty of the mediaeval church was to care for the souls of its members, the mediaeval man was introduced first of all to the great figures of his religion. Christ, Mary, the Apostles,

Moses, Abraham, Isaiah, Noah -- all these names became as familiar to him as his own, and even more charged with meaning than those of the secular heroes. When saints' days and all the important dates of the religious year were wholeheartedly observed, the ordinary parishioner knew the importance and all the history of the "heroes" of his religion. The religious dramatist could confidently bring Adam or Abraham on to the stage, knowing that the audience of townspeople would instantly recognize the character, especially since that character might carry, wear, or be accompanied by some symbol as a guide to recognition -- John the Baptist would be dressed in skins, St. Peter might carry keys, St. George would wear his cross, and St. Hugh, who had been a cobbler, might carry "St. Hugh's bones," the cobbler's tools. The knowledge possessed by the mediaeval audience was gained by ear, but it embraced the Bible and its principal figures as well as many stories of popular and classical legend. The mediaeval man's head was crammed with names capable of starting a spirit, and he often went to plays (or welcomed plays coming to him) simply to have his admiration for the bearers of these names ratified. The playwright looking for a subject for a mystery or miracle play had the whole Bible to draw upon, as well as Christian mythology and patristic literature, while the secular folk-dramatist had all the wealth of local and national, and even universal mythology at his disposal.

In addition to what the people knew, there is what they understood. The dramatist could count upon the valuable aid of allegorical

representation of abstractions. The people were conditioned, especially by mediaeval preaching, to thinking of Death, or Friendship, or Fancy, in human terms, and were willing to follow the portrayal of abstractions as it was done in the morality plays. Acceptance of such abstractions was so complete that up to 1553, and probably beyond, a personified abstraction like Respublica could be made the hero of a play.[4]

Though the piety of the audience of the later professional drama (hereafter called the Elizabethan audience) may not have been as great as that of its predecessors, its knowledge was as broad as that of the mediaeval audience -- broader, in fact, to the extent that certain developments, such as travel and discovery, widespread literacy, and the availability of translations could make it so. There is little reason to suppose that the Elizabethan audience did not know its Bible as well as the mediaeval audience. It was probably not so emotionally involved in the Scriptures, and churchgoing in Protestant England was more optional than in the Catholic Middle Ages, but knowledge of the Bible, despite the tendency of political and intellectual energies to become independent of religion, was still widespread and deeply-rooted. In this respect, Elizabethan England was more mediaeval than modern. The Elizabethan had the Bible in three different translations, and the two hundred editions of the Geneva Bible issued in the first fifty years of Elizabeth's reign must have been widely read.[5]

The general audience for drama did not confine its reading to

the Bible. Those who read -- and the proportion of readers among the general public has been estimated to have been as high as fifty per cent[6] -- appear to have read more widely than well, if some of the book-lists reproduced by Louis B. Wright in his Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England[7] can be taken as representative. But chronicles and histories were popular, and many popular prose works appealed to buyers as "Famous and Pleasant Histories."[8] The public liked stories of great figures, and popular literature, along with such famous works as Holinshed's Chronicles and Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, and even the Bible itself, gave the general public a great store of heroic figures and the dramatist plenty of opportunities to jog his audience's memory.

The standard of education of the Elizabethan audience is often under-rated by Shakespearean scholars who allege that the groundlings were only illiterate boors who came simply to see "inexplicable dumb shows." There may have been "a quantity of barren spectators" among them, but the majority of them probably did not fall into this category, despite Hamlet's criticism of them -- a criticism which is not necessarily Shakespeare's. The extremes of opinion on this matter are represented by E.H. Miller's The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England and Alfred Harbage's Shakespeare's Audience. Miller says:

> The Elizabethan audience was ... a heterogeneous group, only a relatively small part of which read books. It had boors, its "illiterate literates," and its intellectuals.[9]

The reference to "illiterate literates" (presumably meaning people

who had picked up a fair education through the ear, without learning to read) seems to be a slur. But a population composed in large part of illiterate literates had given the earlier drama its respectful and attentive audience, and encouraged playwrights to write. Harbage is more sympathetic to the Elizabethan audience, and probably more accurate. He points out that apprentices, who outnumbered university students in London by ten to one, flocked to the theatres and made up a considerable part of the audience in the pit.[10] These young men, according to Harbage, were normally well-behaved, and, since the gilds made literacy a qualification for entrance into apprenticeship, were familiar with literature and mentally alert.[11] Harbage concludes that Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote for a rank and file "more literate in the sixteenth century than in the eighteenth."[12] He states that even the groundlings were much more alert and discriminating than Hamlet's remarks or the prologue to Every Man in His Humour might suggest. Even A.C. Bradley, whom the presence of the groundlings makes uncomfortable, and who minimizes their numbers, admits that even the groundlings had drama in their veins.[13] Indeed they had, and if Beaumont's Ralph, the grocer's apprentice of The Knight of the Burning Pestle, can, satire aside, be taken as an example of a groundling, the groundlings had tenacious memories for heroes and heroes' parts. "Speak a huffing part," orders Ralph's master, and Ralph at once launches into Hotspur's speech on honour.[14] His master is a figure of fun, but knows his drama and his heroes. The dramatists depended upon these enthusiastic

spectators, who flocked with their fellows to the theatres, drawn by titles like Julius Caesar and eager to see Brutus and Cassius at half-sword parley.

(2) The Elizabethan Audience's Knowledge of the Drama.

As might be expected, the development of the drama brought about a situation in which an author could count upon audience knowledge of preceding plays. This knowledge on the part of the audience was turned to advantage by many of the writers of Senecan and revenge tragedies. Especially after Thomas Kyd had scored a success with The Spanish Tragedy, the public quickly learned the main features of a certain type of play and a certain type of hero. Kyd himself was able to count upon his audience's familiarity with at least some features of his play, according to T.S. Eliot:

> Seneca was a regular part of the school curriculum ... . Every schoolboy with a smattering of Latin had a verse or two of Seneca in his memory; probably a good part of the audience could recognize the origin of the occasional bits of Seneca which are quoted in Latin in some of the popular plays (e.g. several times by Marston). And by the time that The Spanish Tragedy and the old Hamlet had made their success, the English playwright was under the influence of Seneca by being under the influence of his own predecessors.[15]

The playgoers were of course under the same influence. Once a vogue had begun, an audience could be counted on to recognize all the trademarks. Some leading spirit, like Lyly or Kyd or Marlowe,would introduce a new concept and afterward only a casual reference was necessary to elicit the desired response from the audience. For example, Marlowe introduced and carefully defined the concept of the

Machiavel in the first few lines of The Jew of Malta (1590), and afterward the term could be used without explanation in the first and third parts of Shakespeare's Henry VI.[16] What the audience did not know, it was capable of learning quickly, so that some characters became famous, or infamous, as much through the agency of plays as through any other means. Playgoing could be an education in itself.

It is not necessary to make a detailed analysis of the specialized knowledge possessed by audiences who come within the scope of this study. An outline of Elizabethan education is given in Shakespeare's England, and details of the literary attainments of the average Elizabethan are to be found in the books by Wright and Miller cited above, while for an earlier age C.G. Coulton's Mediaeval Panorama provides information about what the mediaeval man might know. My concern is with what the average spectator of the drama might know, that is, what the author, sitting down to characterize his hero in the first act of a play, could reasonably expect this average spectator to know. It would have to be knowledge easily and quickly drawn upon; especially in some of the plays of Shakespeare allusions have to be recognized at once as the exposition develops at great speed. It would have to be knowledge readily summoned up; that is, the author would have to spark a certain enthusiasm in the spectator, making him grasp the allusion eagerly. In other words, the dramatist wanted to stir something close to the heart and accessible to the mind of every member of his

audience.

(3) Popular Feeling and Taste.

It is here that feeling, as well as simply knowledge, comes into the picture. Feeling and taste had a tendency to change during the period under discussion. At the time when folk players were making up entertainments from ballads, their business sense judged the public taste to lean toward representations of the deeds of Robin Hood. An interesting indication of kinship of taste between the Elizabethans and their forefathers is given by the fact that Robin Hood plays drew crowds at the Rose Theatre in 1598.[17] The mummers appear to have found a ready response for plays about St. George, apparently at a time when the cult of this saint was at its height. The opinion of the ecclesiastical authorities about what was good for the public was probably the main reason why the mediaeval people got mystery plays, but there has rarely been a happier agreement between the people and the Church about what was good for the former. The interludes and the professional drama again catered to public taste, and certain preferences of the public's aided the Elizabethan dramatist in building-up his heroes. For example, A.C. Bradley points out that the Elizabethans loved to see ceremonial entrances of royal persons, and to hear drums and trumpets, sennets and flourishes:

> It is evident that the audience loved these sounds, which, from their prevalence in passages of special kinds, seem to have been intended chiefly to stimulate excitement, and sometimes to heighten impressions of grandeur or of

awe.[18]

It should be added that the Elizabethan audiences not only "loved these sounds," but could tell an alarum from a retreat, and discriminate between the importance of a person whose entrance was heralded by a sennet and one who entered to a flourish.[19] Of the use of such music in hero characterization more will be said below, it is only necessary to point out here that the audience did not simply enjoy horns, trumpets, recorders, and other instruments, but recognized their uses as well. The same could be said of picturesque clothing, which is often used meaningfully by dramatists, who appear, for example, to have expected audiences to recognize the significance of a Jewish gaberdine, or Lear's court's "robes and furred gowns," or Prince Hal's beaver, or Prospero's magic robe. That audiences were meant to be discriminating about costumes, as well as pleased by them, will be shown below.

But the Elizabethan audiences were partial, as well as alert, to sights and sounds. And this partiality was not peculiar to them alone, for it seems to have been part of the mediaeval make-up as well, and the mediaeval dramatists had also known how to turn it to advantage.

Other feelings and tastes among the audiences had to be taken into account by playwrights. There appears to have been a good deal of anti-Semitic feeling in Elizabethan England, as many introductions to The Merchant of Venice point out[20] and as the Epilogue to The First Part of Jeronimo makes explicit. The Jews in mediaeval England

were distrusted and hated. Therefore the author of a play with a hero-villain like Barabas in The Jew of Malta could count on popular feeling to help him in characterizing the hero. A certain prejudice against Negroes persuaded all but Shakespeare to keep their heroes white.

Patriotic feeling among his prospective audience could be used to advantage by the dramatist, and was used all the way from the earliest St. George plays to Henry VIII. The English could be counted upon to know their own history as well as they knew their legends and their religion, especially after the sense of apartness and national pride blossomed under Elizabeth I, and the English kings lent themselves readily to heroic portrayal -- with certain reservations. The audience knew too much about Henry V, for example, and came partly to see how the dramatist who took him for a hero would rise to the occasion. That Shakespeare felt the weight of this occasion is evident from the prologues in Henry V[21] and from certain missteps in characterization which will be discussed below. The national fervour of the Elizabethans was perhaps a counterpart of the piety of the mediaeval mystery audiences, and the dramatist could count upon the former to bring to a representation of Henry V something of the same enthusiasm and willingness to believe that their predecessors had brought to the representations of the life of Christ. The Elizabethan audience had a marvellous enthusiasm for things national, an enthusiasm which tended to slip at times into jingoism.

In the representations of heroes like Henry V and Christ, audience knowledge and audience feeling blended and gave the dramatist great help as well as some trouble. Not an incident could be changed here, and hardly any event could be coloured to show the hero in a light much different from that in which the audience already thought of him. A too-great knowledge on the audience's part, combined with a tendency -- in the case of the mysteries, a necessity -- to apply this knowledge rather rigidly could be a hindrance to the dramatist who wished to use imagination in hero-presentation.[22]

(4) Limitation of Popular Knowledge.

There are, however, areas in which the dramatist's prospective audience could hardly be expected to have the knowledge with which some modern scholars tend to credit them. The Elizabethan audience may have had the extensive knowledge of character-types with which Madeleine Doran credits them,[23] for the art of literary portraiture had been well-developed in England since mediaeval times through the sermon, the story, and the morality play, and Character books became popular after the publication in 1592 of Meric Casaubon's edition of Theoprastus.[24] However, character-types, with some exceptions such as the revenger or the *miles gloriosus*, are generally used in minor roles in the Elizabethan drama.

It is sometimes assumed as well that the dramatist had only to allude to a certain humour, or direct that the hero be made up in

a certain way, and the task of hero-characterization was finished. The popularity, and apparent simplicity, of Ben Jonson's plays, along with the known public interest in such popular medical-psychology books as Elyot's Castel of Helthe and Bright's Melancholy has encouraged this assumption.[25] J.W. Draper, for example, points out, in The Humours and Shakespeare's Characters, that "Orlando's hair ... seems to have been reddish-brown,"[26] and says that "the very moment that the handsome Orlando with red-brown hair stepped out upon the stage, the Elizabethans must have known that he was sanguine, and so was doubtless cast as the lover-hero of the comedy."[27]

The Elizabethan dramatist who relied upon appearance only to characterize his heroes would have counted too much upon the knowledge of his audience. To L.C.T. Forest's cautionary essay on this subject, "A Caveat for Critics against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology,"[28] little needs to be added. Shakespeare, for example, recognizes that appearance is only part of characterization, and usually makes the connection between appearance and character, when there is one, quite explicit. Thus we have the connection in Richard III:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain.
>
> (I, i, 28-30)

The therefore is most important. In Julius Caesar:

> Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.
> He thinks too much, such men are dangerous.
>
> (I,ii, 194-5)

When Romeo, in only his second appearance in Romeo and Juliet, heaves a heavy sigh: "Aye me, sad hours seem long" (I, i, 167), those among the audience who had the appropriate knowledge would have seen at once that Romeo must be a lover, for, as Robert Burton was to put it later, lovers heave deep sighs because they thereby remove "the fumes of the heart" and cool that organ.[29] But this word, or sigh, to the wise is followed by many lines which leave even the dullest spectator in no doubt about Romeo's condition.

(5) Conclusion.

The English dramatists of the period under study could, within certain limits, count upon a good deal of knowledge on the part of their audiences, and could use this knowledge as an aid in hero-characterization. Englishmen knew their Bible, they knew local, national, and world legend and mythology, and they knew, from at least the mid-sixteenth century onward, a great deal of classical history and the history of their own country. They had a vast store of heroic names, and knew what these names connoted, and the cycles of popular taste brought certain of these names into popularity at different times in a manner fairly important to our subject.

The dramatist could logically and fairly ask his audience to call upon their knowledge of a particular character to help him in characterizing his hero or to aid in their understanding of the hero. He could use their tastes, prejudices, and pre-dispositions to help himself, and could even ask his audience to remember or forget some-

[illegible]

[illegible]

(.) [illegible].

[illegible]

thing which they had seen in previous plays. Perhaps some dramatists took a too-great advantage, but the audience seems to have been quite willing to apply its knowledge under the direction of the playwright, particularly when it came to remembering and perpetuating a popular conception of a hero. Only one or two dramatists, as will be seen, asked their audiences to forget.

Besides audience knowledge the dramatist could count upon enthusiasm and alertness. The audience enjoyed and could discriminate between certain types of music, for instance. They were asked to be alert not only to the meaning of such things as sennets and flourishes but even, as will be seen, to the meaning of changes from verse to prose and back again, and to variations of verse itself. Using their eyes, the members of the audience distinguished between various costumes and trappings, and were alert to the appearance of heroes. Keeping in mind an audience possessing all these qualities, it is possible to survey the techniques of hero build-up, looking at the clues to character which were put into the plays for the audience to see.

[illegible]

Footnotes: Chapter I

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1957), VI (C) ll. 437-8.

[2] G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Mediaeval England (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 13-16.

[3] Quoted Ibid., p. 14 (Emphasis added).

[4] Respublica was written in 1553, and many moralities were printed in the 1560's.

[5] cf. Ronald Bayne, "Religion." Chapter II of Life in Shakespeare's England (Oxford, 1916), p. 74.

[6] Edwin H. Miller, The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England (Harvard, 1959), p. 39.

[7] Louis B. Wright, Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England (Chapel Hill, 1935), IV.

[8] Ibid., pp. 88-90.

[9] Miller, op. cit., p. 62.

[10] Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare's Audience (New York, 1958), pp. 80-83.

[11] Ibid., 146. See also Wright, op. cit., III. There appear to be less grounds than would be considered fair for John Dover Wilson's contempt for "'prentice boys," expressed in What Happens in Hamlet (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 17-19.

[12] Harbage, op. cit., p. 146.

[13] A. C. Bradley, "Shakespeare's Theatre and Audience," Oxford Lectures on Poetry (London, 1955), pp. 361-93.

[14] Beaumont and Fletcher, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, Induction.

[15] T. S. Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation," Essays in Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1956), p. 20. This essay is a reprint of Eliot's introduction to Newton's Seneca His Tenne Tragedies (London, 1927).

[16] Not, of course, in the First Act, or as hero build-up in the sense that we are concerned with here. Neither Alençon nor Richard, to whom the name is applied in I Henry VI, V, iv, 74 and III Henry VI, III, ii, 193 respectively, is the hero of the play.

[17] cf. A. H. Thorndike, "The Relation of As You Like It to Robin Hood Plays," J E G P , IV (1902), pp. 59-69.

[18] A. C. Bradley, op. cit., pp. 370-71.

[19] cf. C. L. Lambertson, Shakespeare's Use of Music as a Dramatic Device. Unpublished dissertation (University of Alberta, 1941), pp. 136-7. cf. also E. J. Dent, "Shakespeare and Music," in A Companion to Shakespeare Studies, ed. H. Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison (New York, 1960), pp. 136-60.

[20] See, for example, The Arden edition of The Merchant of Venice, ed. J. R. Brown (London, 1955), Introd., pp. xxxviii-xxxix. See also The Merchant of Venice, ed. Sir A. Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1953), Introd., pp. xiii-xviii.

[21] The prologues, or choruses, in Henry V, appear to indicate that Shakespeare felt that he had to rise to an occasion. J. H. Walter, editor of the Arden Henry V (London, 1954) says in his note on the Prologue to Act One that, "Moore Smith, and Creizenach, English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, 1916, p. 276, have both noted that in mood and substance the choruses in H 5 are unique in Elizabethan plays." John Dover Wilson in his introduction to Henry V (Cambridge, 1947), says (pp. xii-xv) that in Henry V "theme and hero clearly called for epic." -- "Here is no ordinary theme, but 'so great an object' that [Shakespeare] honestly doubts whether he can compass it, and doubts the more that the nature of his material compels him to launch forth upon an untried form of drama. The diffidence of the Chorus is the expression of a genuine attitude of mind."

[22] Not, of course, that the mediaeval dramatists would have changed the picture of Christ which they found in the Scriptures, but there are indications of some experimentation with minor characters, such as Herod, who in the thirty-first York play is a reasonable and almost kindly fellow.

[23] Madeleine Doran, Endeavours of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama (Madison, Wisconsin, 1954), IX. See also Paul W. Kreider, Elizabethan Comic Conventions in the Comedies of George Chapman (Ann Arbor, 1935), VII.

[24] For example, Joseph Hall's Characters of Virtues and Vices came out in 1608, Thomas Overbury's Characters in 1614.

[25] The Castel of Helthe had several printings between 1534 and 1610. Timothy Bright's Melancholy had two editions in 1586 and one in 1613; cf. Wright, Middle-Class Culture, XV.

[26] J. W. Draper, The Humours and Shakespeare's Characters (Durham, 1945), p. 21.

[27] Ibid., p. 28.

[28] P M L A , LXI (1946), pp. 651-72.

[29] Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. A. R. Shilleto (London and New York, 1893), I, p. 175.

Chapter II

THE HERO BUILDS HIMSELF UP

I. Self-Characterization along with Self-Identification.

In many of the plays of the early, or pre-Elizabethan, part of the period covered by this study, self-identification and self-characterization by the hero are synonymous. When the dramatist has made the leading actor state, and sometimes prove, who he is then characterization of the hero is finished. It is the proof of identity, following so closely upon self-identification, that constitutes the complete characterization in these plays.

The typical English folk-play has a Presenter, who calls on each character in turn to step forward and perform his part, starting with the most important character, the hero, and working down. The call names each character, but then the called person proceeds to present himself all over again. He steps forward and says, "I am King Alfred" or, "I am Saint George," or he uses a variant of this formula which usually goes, "In come I Saint George." He also points out the evidence that he is what he claims to be:

> I am King Alfred, and this here is my bride.
> I've a crown on my pate and a sword by my side.[1]

Or, partly to prove who he is, partly to prove what he is, the hero gives an autobiographical sketch, as in Chambers's normalized text of a folk-play:[2]

In come I, Saint George,
The man of courage bold.
With my broad axe and sword
I won a crown of gold.
I fought the fiery dragon,
And led him to the slaughter,
And by these means I won
The king of Egypt's daughter.[3]

In the mystery plays, as in most of the folk-plays, the name of a hero is everything, so that hero-identification is the same as hero-characterization. In addition, the "proof" given in folk-plays is less necessary, because of the audience's piety and willingness to believe. When God Himself is the chief character in a pageant, as in the Creation sequences which launch the York, Chester, and Towneley cycles, and the Ludus Coventriae,[4] He has only to announce Himself. Good Scriptural authority (Rev. I: viii) exists for God's usual self-identifying and "characterizing" line, "I am Alpha and Omega."

In the second play of the Ludus Coventriae,[5] "The Fall of Man," Adam characterizes himself as much as is necessary by identifying himself indirectly. He tells the audience that he is a good gardener. The prophets, in the seventh of the Ludus Coventriae, simply have to state who they are, and so so in turn by using the unvarying "I am ..." formula. The twenty-first pageant of this cycle, "The Baptism of Christ," opens with John the Baptist telling the audience, "Ecce vox clamantis in deserto! I am the voyce of wyldernesse," and in the thirty-third pageant, "The Descent into Hell," the main character states that he is "the sowle of Cryst Jhesu." No other build-up is

necessary in the cases just cited from the Ludus Coventriae, though some of the authors of this cycle have taken pains to make introductions and exposition interesting.

While in the mystery plays the great names are sufficient to characterize as well as identify the leading characters, in the moralities the name of a personified abstraction is also sufficient for characterization. "Wisdom" has, after all, such a self-descriptive name that, as chief figure in the play Wisdom, he has only to tell the audience who he is to tell them what he is:"I am clepyd of hem that in erthe be, Everlastyng Wysdom."[6] The tone of this self-introduction, like that of many other self-introductions in these plays, has the gravity, and even pompousness, which is considered proper to an exalted personage. But on the other hand, Infans, in Mundus et Infans,[7] identifies himself with almost diffident courtesy, for his main characteristic is his helplessness, and he wishes to draw attention to this feature:

> Now semely syrs, beholde on me
> How mankynde doth begynne:
> I am a child, as you may see.
>
> (28-30)

There is little more that Mankind, hero of the play of that name, can say about himself when he has said, "My name ys Mankynde."[8]

In the secular drama, The Four PP (pr. c. 1544),[9] is a play in which the names of the four chief characters are sufficient to characterize them, so that the first person on stage, the Palmer, can draw attention to his appearance with the statement, made straight

to the audience, "I am a Palmer, as ye se," (1.9) and the label covers his character. The titular hero of Lusty Juventus[10] (pr. c.1565) tells the audience after a singing entrance that "Youth full of pleasure is my proper name," while a play with a morality flavour, Three Lords of London (pr. 1590) has the three lords, Pomp, Policy, and Pleasure, characterize themselves simply by stating their names. In another moralizing play, John Bale's Kynge Johan (1536)[11] the hero seems to enter alone, and he at once launches into a sermon-like speech, wherein he identifies himself: "Johan, Kyng of Ynglond, the cronyclys doth me call" (1.9). This introduction, anachronism aside, is a neatly-conveyed indication of the hero's importance; he is a man whose life is important enough to be chronicled.

George Chapman has a feast of self-presentation in The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (1595-6), in which, because of the technique necessitated by a multiple-disguise plot, it is impossible to separate characterization from identification. The hero, who adopts three different disguises, frankly tells the audience, in one of his first speeches, who he is and who he will become in the course of the play:

> I am Cleanthes and blind Iras too,
> And more than these, as you shall soon perceive,
> Yet but a shepherd's son at Memphis born;
> My father was a fortune-teller and from him I learnt his art,
> And, knowing to grow great was to grow rich,
> Such money as I got by palmistry
> I put to use, and by that means became
> To take the shape of Leon, by which name

> I am well known a wealthy usurer;
> And more than this I am two noblemen:
> Count Hermes is another of my names,
> And Duke Cleanthes whom the Queen so loves.
> (sc. i, 110-22)

Though the use of the simple "I am ..." formula for self-presentation was widespread in the pre-Elizabethan drama, it is not much used for heroes of the professional drama. The case of Chapman's Cleanthes has been noted. A singing self-introduction which is also self-characterization is found in a much earlier play, Tom Tyler and His Wife[12] (pr. c.1560). The audience knows the title of the play, and the phrase "poor Tyler" refers to both name and trade, and may give a hint of the hero's character as he sings,

> I am a poor Tyler in simple aray,
> And get a poor living ... .
> (ll. 1-2)

In all of Shakespeare's plays only one hero, Julius Caesar, uses the simple "I am ..." form to name himself, and here self-identification and self-characterization come together in a way not seen before. This point will be discussed more fully below, for Caesar is not directly addressing the audience. It is usually only minor characters in the full-grown drama who identify and characterize themselves directly to the audience, except in remote cases where the hero is disguised.

But the hero, as well as characterizing himself when he identifies himself to the audience, may also characterize himself when he identifies himself to others on stage. Discussion of this technique is divisible into several sections, and some treatment of the subject

will be made under the headings, "Hero Build-up through the Use of Apostrophe," and "Unwitting Self-Characterization," below. When the Herods, Pharaohs, and Pilates of the mysteries are the most important figures in particular pageants, they are usually found telling their courts, who may be presumed to know them already, who they are. The idea behind the rants of these people may be that to the dramatists this is the way in which absolute and tyrannical rulers behave in their courts. "How else, in unsophisticated drama, are tyrants and fighting men to talk?", asks Sir E.K. Chambers testily.[13] They have to keep asserting themselves, and telling their followers who they are, so that the theme of their opening speeches is, "I am Herod (Pilate, Pharaoh), so shut up!" A modern dramatist, incidentally, one with a good knowledge of human psychology, could not more effectively render the sense of insecurity which besets these characters. It is certainly no accident that the Satan of the mysteries also uses the same type of speech before his followers, so that his vaunting self-introductions and those of the villain-heroes are often indistinguishable. "I am your lord Lucifer [and] my name is cleped Sir Satan," is his cry in the Ludus Coventriae "Council of the Jews."

The credulity and understanding of the mediaeval audiences were hardly strained by such explicitness. The dramatists, when they could do so, used familiar lines from the Scriptures to give authenticity and force to the self-introductions of the nobler characters. For example, when Jesus appears to the twelve disciples in the York

"Incredulity of Thomas,"[14] He hardly needs to say, "I am Christ," but He does so. Given the religious atmosphere in which the mystery plays were performed, no hero build-up could have more force than this three-word introduction, "I am Christ." The most effective use, for the joint purpose of hero-identification and characterization, of Scripture in the mysteries may be the first lines spoken by Jesus in the Chester pageant, "Lazarus,"[15] "Brethren, I am filius Dei the lighte of the world."

Skelton's Magnyfycence, hero of the play of that name,[16] cannot resist telling everyone who he is, even though the audience and those on stage have already been told that "Magnyfycence is coming here at hand." In his self-announcement he conveys his nobility and haughtiness:

> To assure you of my noble port and fame,
> Who list to know, Magnyfycence I hight.
>
> (ll. 163-4)

Unsolicited self-identification of the hero is fairly rare in Elizabethan drama, identification which also contains characterization, rarer. Sometimes a succinct characterization follows self-identification so closely that everything is done in a line, as in George A Green's response to the question, "Who art thou?": "Why I am George A Green. True liegeman to my king."[17] Another case of swift self-characterization which is practically inseparable from identification is seen in the soliloquy of the hero of Lyly's <u>Sappho and Phao</u>:[18] "Thou art a Ferryman, Phao, yet a free man."

Shakespeare's use of the self-identifying "I am Caesar" in

Julius Caesar is unique and striking, and will be discussed fully below under the heading of "Unwitting Self-characterization."

II. Self-Characterization.

(1) Self-Characterization direct to the Audience.

To the examples of hero-characterization accomplished at the same time as hero-identification should be added the blunt, often naive self-characterization spoken directly to the audience.

> No Elizabethan dramatist -- no dramatist after all before the middle of the nineteenth century -- quite realized, or showed that he realized, that a character is not one who tells his story but acts it.

So says E.E. Stoll,[19] and so in something of the same tone had said L.L. Schücking.[20] But the convention of self-characterization in Elizabethan and earlier English drama cannot be judged by the standards of Ibsen. The last statement is so elementary that one would be ashamed to make it except that Ibsen is so often used as a touchstone for judging Shakespeare's technique.[21]

From the beginnings until at least to the end of the Elizabethan era, characters in the English drama exercise a privilege of direct address to the audience, and one of the subjects of their talk is themselves. A few of these characters are heroes, heroes whose creators know that, just as the simplest method of identifying a hero is to have him tell the audience, "I am St.George," the simplest

method of characterizing him is to have him tell them "I am a fine fellow," or "I am a villain."

The folk-play heroes have a frankness worthy of a Beowulf as they talk about their courage and abilities, and this frankness is combined with a penchant for autobiography which indicates an intense mediaeval interest in lineage and records. It has already been seen that the folk hero launches into an autobiographical statement as if to prove that he is St. George. His autobiography is usually also his combat record, and the more impressive the record the greater the hero. The claim of boldness and courage is often all that is necessary for characterization in this type of play. St. George is not Hamlet, but a man who is in the play to fight, so that when he characterizes himself to the audience as a bold battler the build-up is adequate. A typical St. George claim goes:

> Many were the giants that I did subdue;
> I ran the fiery dragon through and through,
> 'Twas I that freed fair Sabra from the stake.
> What more could mortal man undertake?[22]

In the mystery plays God has to characterize Himself directly to the audience, and tell them that He is all-powerful:

> Endles alsoe, moste of postie,
> I am and have bene ever,

He says at the beginning of the Chester "Creation and Fall." The technique is sometimes used with other leading figures or heroes of individual pageants. The thirteenth York play, "Joseph's Trouble," contains an instance of self-characterization in a direct appeal to the audience. The "trouble" is over Mary's pregnancy, a

condition for which Joseph is not responsible because, as he puts it,

> I am of grete elde,
> Wayke and al unwelde,
> As ilke man se it maye.
>
> (ll. 5-7)

The dramatist is anxious to show the audience that Mary's pregnancy is of divine origin, and has to characterize Joseph as old and feeble. The most forceful way of doing so that he knows is through direct address by Joseph to the audience, calling on them to witness his condition. Usually, however, the heroes of the mysteries are self-characterized in conversation with others on stage, or in self-announcement to others. But the Ludus Coventriae Noah characterizes himself as the second father of mankind in a speech delivered straight to the audience ("Noe, seres, my name is knowe ..."), and he indicates that he is proud of the honour.

The bolstering of self-characterization with autobiography is sometimes done in the mysteries. A striking example is found in the ninth York pageant, of which Noah is the hero.[23] Noah has a prayerful speech to begin the play, but is addressing the audience, calling them "Syrs" and telling about himself and his father Lamech. The autobiography given here has some bearing upon the plot and some didactic value, as well as helping to characterize the hero.

As has been mentioned, not much room is left for additional characterization of any kind in most of the morality plays after the hero has told the audience that he is Wisdom, or Humanum Genus, or Mankind. The miracle plays, whose heroes have less descriptive names,

have one example of self-characterization direct to the audience. It is found in the Digby Conversion of St. Paul,[24] where Saul has a Herodian boast after entering alone, to tell of his power and his hatred of Christians (15f.).

In the secular drama, Fulgens, in Medwall's Fulgens and Lucres (1497), has a very long speech to the audience, in which he characterizes himself, quite frankly, as a worthy man, and points to his obvious prosperity as proof of his worthiness. He also gives some autobiographical information, which has a bearing upon the action of the play, while telling about his wife and daughter.[25]

From Fulgens and Lucres to the end of the period under study there are a few heroes and heroines of English plays who characterize themselves directly to the audience. Melebea, in the interlude Calisto and Melebea (pr. 1530), tells the audience that besides being beautiful she is a lover of virtue.[26] Jack Juggler, in the interlude of that name (pr. 1562), introduces and characterizes himself to the audience, saying:

> And as for me, of my mother I have been taught
> To be merry when I may, and take no thought.[27]

But it is necessary to trace the extant drama to 1596 before one finds another hero frankly addressing the audience and telling about his character, his lineage, and his ambition. This hero is of course Chapman's Duke Cleanthes in The Blind Beggar of Alexandria. The Blind Beggar appears to contain the only use of this technique in the full-grown Elizabethan drama.

(2) Direct Self-Characterization to Other Characters.

The extant folk-drama affords no instance of a hero characterizing himself to another person in the play. God, as has been seen, characterizes Himself as all-powerful directly to the mystery audiences, and it is hard to see how any other method than this one was possible to the mystery dramatists. The main hero of the mystery cycles, Christ, displays the same reticence about Himself that He has in the Bible. Most of the characterization of Christ is done by other methods than self-description -- by other speakers, by association, or by use of His great name. The method of the mystery writers is to have Christ say only what the Bible records that He said, and to make the most of the vivid contrast between a usually-silent Son of Man and his noisy adversaries. Christ does say, in the Chester "Lazarus," that He is "filius Dei the lighte of the world," but this is the only instance in all the mystery plays of explicit self-characterization by Christ. Even the heroes of individual plays -- Moses, Abraham, Noah, and others -- usually characterize themselves as old men, or pious men, in prayer, and not to other characters in their plays. It is the tyrants who, when they are "heroes" of individual pageants,[28] build themselves up as powerful and beautiful persons, often betraying themselves in their attempts to characterize themselves as great. So it may be said that, probably because of the fact that Christ says little about Himself in the Bible, a general technique in the mystery plays is for the hero to refrain from pointing out his worth to the

audience or to others on stage, while the villains, or villain-heroes, like Herod, regularly indulge in self-description and self-praise. If a "good" character is heard to say that he is righteous, it will usually be found that he is talking to God; and the mediaeval man knew that people would not lie to God. Of course, any person who boasts of his prowess as Herod or Pilate do can show that he is great by making good these boasts, but every member of the mediaeval audience knew that the real power was held by the quiet Christ. The influence of the mysteries is probably at work in the Digby miracle-play, The Conversion of St. Paul, when Saul makes his boasting speech on first entering. At this point of the Digby play the hero is in his most deluded state.

The hero has to be made known, and the audience tacitly agrees to accept a certain amount of expository characterization. Some dramatists give this characterization quite mechanically. In John Bale's "interlude," John Baptist's Preaching, Christ identifies and characterizes himself to John, unasked, in the most straightforward manner: "I am Jesus Christ, the son of the living God."[29] But often it is a "deluded" hero who talks about himself to others without any prompting. Heroes of this type are Youth, in The Interlude of Youth (pr. 1554), who demands room so that he can strut about and sing his own praises,[30] Treasure, who praises herself to Lust, in The Trial of Treasure (pr. 1567),[31] Cambyses in the play of which he is the hero (pr. 1561),[32] and Croesus, who rants to his court about his own greatness at the beginning of William Alexander's Croesus (pr. 1607).[33]

In the case of Virginia, heroine of Appius and Virginia (pr. 1575), the fact that she hastens to characterize herself to her mother, who might be expected to know her well enough, is an indication of the dramatist's dependance upon the audience's willingness to accept a certain amount of expository characterization.

The plays just mentioned, from John Baptist's Preaching to Appius and Virginia, contain instances of mechanical, unsolicited self build-up by the hero or heroine. But other dramatists, while recognizing that the hero has to be characterized, appear to have invented devices to make self-characterization more interesting. Thus the hero may identify and partly characterize himself to someone whom he has just met, as Petruchio does in The Taming of the Shrew (I, ii, 54-76). He may, in a certain situation which requires some recapitulation of his own story or personal life, make such a recapitulation and tell a good deal about himself in passing, as King Leir, Gorboduc, and Prospero do when they first appear. Not much of a pretext has to be invented for self-characterization in the opening scenes of a play, as has been said, and a good deal of audience credulity can be gained by drawing the audience at once into the middle of a tense situation. The lovesickness of Romeo and Troilus are shown in this way. Or the hero can be answering a question which is understood to have been asked just before the first line of the play, a device which Shakespeare uses in The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It. Antonio and Orlando have obviously been asked about themselves, and characterize themselves

in their replies. Volpone adds to what the audience has seen of him in his opening devotions to his gold when he tells Mosca, in reply to the servant's remark, "Riches are ... a greater good than wisdom," that he derives even more satisfaction from the getting than from the having (I, i, 28f.). Shakespeare and Jonson knew that the audience would accept preliminary self-characterization, and do not hesitate to use this technique. Dekker, on the other hand, apparently trying to make exposition "interesting," makes the hero of Old Fortunatus (1599) carry on a rather absurd conversation with an echo and characterize himself in the course of it (I, i, 1-63).

One of the earliest uses of a simple pretext to make self-characterization more interesting appears in George A Green, whose hero emerges vividly from a background of rebels and wavering citizens with his proud and self-descriptive response to the sneering question, "Who art thou?":

> Why I am George A Green
> True liegeman to my king.[35]

This combining of self-characterization with self-justification -- a true description of the hero's own character is forced from him almost unawares -- is an excellent way of achieving naturalness, and Shakespeare uses it in Henry V (I, ii, 241-3), and in Othello. The latter play shows one of the best examples of this kind of self-characterization that can be found. Othello is roused by Iago's "frank" statement of the dangers consequent upon the elopement, and exclaims:

> Let him do his spite;
> My services which I have done the signiory
> Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know, --
> Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
> I shall promulgate -- I fetch my life and being
> From men of royal siege, and my demerits
> May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
> As this that I have reached.
>
> (I, ii, 17-24)

This speech is rather self-congratulatory and fulsome, but it is supposed to be called out by the situation, and it adds to the audience's knowledge of the hero.

Another device for making self-characterization of the hero to others on stage more interesting is first seen in Greene's Orlando Furioso, a play acted in 1592.[36] The first act of Orlando consists mainly of a speech-contest between five suitors for the hand of Angelica, daughter of the Emperor of Africa. Each suitor states his qualifications for the honour by telling of his devotion, his fortune,and the dangers he has passed while coming to woo the princess. Orlando, the hero, speaks last, and his speech is at least three times as long as any of the others. The lady chooses him. It should be noted that the action is not halted for a self-characterizing speech from the hero. In Othello, the hero's self-justifying speech before the Senate -- a speech which appears to owe something to Orlando's -- is delivered during a pause in rapid action, but Shakespeare contrives so to heighten the importance of this passage of self-characterization that it is hardly noticeable that the action has stopped. When Orlando begins:

> Lords of the South, & Princes of esteeme,
> Viceroys unto the state of Affrica:
> I am no King, yet am I princely borne ... ,[37]

he is one more contestant stating his claim. But when Othello addresses the "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors," the audience knows that his career and his marriage hang in the balance. His speech is only incidentally one of self-characterization, yet he contrives to tell a good deal about himself in the course of it. Most important of all, the audience is interested in this self-characterization; the speech is not simply a statement of information which the audience feels it has to get up. The dexterous placing of this piece of self-characterization of Othello becomes more apparent when one compares it,not with that in Orlando Furioso, a play whose hero-characterization is meritorious enough in its own way, but with the self-build-up of heroes and heroines of other plays of the Elizabethan era such as Samuel Daniel's Cleopatra (pr. 1594)[38] or Samuel Brandon's Virtuous Octavia (pr. 1598).[39] In the two plays named the heroines characterize themselves with painful slowness. The characterizations in Orlando Furioso and Othello are examples of hero self-characterization inspired by the necessities of a dramatic situation, and therefore made interesting. In the case of Othello, the Venetian Senate, Othello's friends, and the audience want him to say what he does.

Like self-identification, self-characterization may be given in response to a question. The case of George A Green's reply to the question, "Who art thou?" has been cited. A simple question-

answer situation used for the purpose of self-characterization is seen in The Interlude of Youth:

> Charity. Are you so disposed to do,
> To follow vice, and let virtue go?
> Youth. Yea, sir, even so.[40]

But the frequent nobility of heroes perhaps prevented this device from being widely used as a pretext for self-characterization. People, even in plays, can hardly ask kings and lords what they are.

Another device for working a speech of self-characterization into the dialogue of a play after the opening is to be seen in a few Elizabethan dramas. This is the device of making the speech so startling, so far from what the audience is prepared for that they will listen without impatience. Marston is obviously trying for this effect in The Insatiate Countess (pr. 1613), and I know of no other playwright who used the device before him, though the audience which saw Macbeth for the first time could scarcely have been prepared to hear Lady Macbeth speak as she does at her first entrance.[41] The Insatiate Countess (Marston gives away part of the surprise in the title) is discovered "sitting at a little table covered with blacke, on which standes two blacke tapers lighted, she in mourning."[42] Roberto, Guido, and Mizaldus enter and, in conversation at one side of the stage, reveal that the Countess has been in deep mourning since she was widowed, and that Roberto has come to "raise [her] from this so infernall sadnesse" (I, i, 31). At first the Countess asks Roberto not to mock her grief, for

> Tears are as due a Tribute to the dead,
> As feare to God, and duty unto Kings,
> Love to the Just, or hate unto the Wicked
> (I, i, 33-5)

But, after a mild urging to "Leave to lament this necessary change" (I, i, 41), she throws aside her pose and reveals her character with startling explicitness:

> I waile his losse! Sinke him tenne cubites deeper,
> I may not feare his resurrection:
> I will be sworne upon the holy Writ
> I morne thus fervent 'cause he died no sooner:
> He buried me alive,
> . . . . . .
> Faire women play: she's chaste whom none will have.
> (I, i, 43f)

The surprise occasioned by this outburst not only helps to drive this self-characterization home forcefully, but allays scepticism at such frank self-revelation to strangers. Marston is fond of surprising his audience, for the hero of The Malcontent undergoes a sudden change of character the first time that he is left alone.

There are, to sum up, not many methods of hero self-characterization to other persons on stage which are completely original. The basic practice is simply for the hero to tell others what he is, and the only room for innovation is in the motivating and placing of the speech or speeches in which he does so. Some dramatists simply used the conventional expository method, trusting to the patience and attention of the audience, but the natural desire for novelty and refinement seems to have led to the placing of self-characterizing speeches at points other than the beginning of the play, and to the invention of devices to make these speeches more interesting. Thus

the hero is asked about himself, or goaded into telling about himself. The best uses of the self-characterizing technique are seen in plays the audiences of which are made to want or need to know the facts. The audience's curiosity may be stirred by an exciting entrance, by the hero's appearance or behaviour (as in The Malcontent, the revenge tragedies like Hoffman or Antonio's Revenge, or in plays like Volpone, Hamlet, and The Tempest), or by action which involves them in the hero's fortunes. The skill which Shakespeare shows in Othello is not surpassed anywhere, for in this play the self-characterizing speeches of the hero are blended into the web of the play itself, though Othello is characterized by other devices as well.

(3) Apostrophe and Soliloquy in Self-Characterization.

There is evidence in the mystery plays that one or more of the mediaeval playwrights had the idea of characterizing important people by showing their piety, or lack of it. The idea is one that would readily come to an ecclesiastical author. Thus the Ludus Coventriae Noah and Abraham, the Towneley Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and the Brome and Chester Abrahams enter alone, praying. The necessity of getting a hero identified as well as characterized leads to the rather odd spectacle of God's favoured people telling God who they are, for Abraham in the Ludus Coventriae reminds God that he, the speaker, is old Abraham, and Noah tells God his name in the fourth pageant of this cycle. But the device is a move forward from direct address to the audience, and is an interesting variant on address to

other persons in the play. It may even have something to do with the origin of the soliloquy in English drama; Shakespeare often uses apostrophe or prayer to lead into a soliloquy.[42] The idea of characterizing a hero by letting the audience overhear his devotions extends at least as far as Volpone.

Apostrophe is often used in the mystery plays as a means of separating sheep from goats, good characters from bad. The fact that a character enters praying to God does not necessarily make him the hero of a pageant, but heroes of individual pageants often characterize themselves by their prayers. All but one of the Abrahams of the mystery cycles[43] characterize themselves as pious by walking on-stage praying, and so do many of the Noahs, Simeons, and Josephs. An entrance of this kind would impress people watching at a religious festival. The idea, once it took hold, allowed for the use of contrast, so that in the Towneley "Death of Abel"[44] Cain's character is emphasised by showing him first as a foul-mouthed person, one who picks fights with his uncouth servant, and then having Abel enter with the name of God and a blessing on his lips.

Nor does the use of prayer or apostrophe to characterize certain heroes end here in the mysteries. A hero could also be known, or partly known, by the gods whom he invoked. The Ludus Coventriae "Herod the Great" has Herod as villain-hero. He is a hero whose major-domo changes the familiar and pious, "God rest ye merry" into "Most mighty Mahoun meng you with mirth!" (l. 1), and who himself invokes "Mahoun in heaven" (l. 127). Even without any previous

knowledge of Herod, and even without Herod's other behaviour (the boasting, the deafening shouts for silence, and the threats), the audience would have known by the leading figure's reliance upon strange gods that he was a bad man.

The author of the Croxton Play of the Sacrament,[45] for one, picked up this idea, and it is part of Jew Jonathas' self-revelation that he prays to Mahomet:

> Now, almighty Machomet, marke in thi mageste,
> Whose lawes tendrely I have to fulfyll,
> After my dethe bryng me to thy hyghe see
> My soule for to save yff yt be thy wyll.
>
> (ll. 69-72)

This speech could be, on the one hand, the author's idea of how Mahometans pray. On the other hand, it could be a careful parody of a Christian prayer, designed to show the depths of Jonathas' villainy.

The technique of self-characterization through apostrophe or through the choice of gods to pray to does not demand that a full-blown prayer be put into the mouth of the person characterizing himself. Invocations, blessings, or, conversely, curses often serve the purpose as well. In fact, in some moralities the hero is the only person to employ the name of God in a reverent manner, as do Humanum Genus in The Castle of Perseverance (1425)[46] and Infans in Mundus et Infans. In the miracle play, The Conversion of Mary Magdalene, Mary shows her uncorrupted state at the play's beginning by praising God.[47]

The first English secular play, Fulgens and Lucres, uses this

idea of characterizing a leading figure by having him show his piety first of all. Perhaps Medwall wants to get his play started, and the blessing spoken by Fulgens is a conventional way of beginning, but it is also an indication of Fulgens' character that he opens as he does:

> Intrat Fulgens dicens. Everlastyng ioy with honoure and praise
> Be unto our most drad lord and savyour
> Which doth us help and comfort many ways ... .
> (l. 202f)

Barnabas, the "hero" or good son in Nice Wanton (pr. 1560), enters quoting from the Bible in soliloquy,[48] and in Phillip's interlude Patient Grissil (1565-6),[49] the self-characterizing song of the heroine at her entrance is sermon-like in its piety. The first thing that the audience learns about King Leir is that he is a devout Christian:

> Thus to our grief the obsequies perform'd
> Of our (too late) deceast and dearest Queen
> Whose soul I hope, possest of heavenly joyes
> Doth ride in triumph 'mongst the Cherubins.[50]

Leir says later (l. 557) that he intends to betake himself to his prayers and beads. Edward Longshanks, hero of Peele's Edward I (pr. 1593), is shown as gracious and pious at his first entrance:

> O God my God, the brightnesse of my daye,
> How oft hast thou preserv'd thy servant safe,
> By sea and land, yea in the gates of death,
> O God to thee how highly am I bound ... .[51]

This is the appropriate prayer of thanks made by a good king to God, Who has given him victory. Shakespeare's Henry V is carefully shown to be the same type of man (IV, viii, 111f), though not in the first act. In A Knack to Know a Knave (pr. 1596), King Edgar begins

the play by praising God for making his reign long and peaceful,[52] and Heywood, probably feeling the weight of the occasion, cautiously makes the Queen show her piety in the opening lines of If You Know Not Me, or The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth says that she holds her throne "by God's assistance and the power of Heaven."[53]

The Elizabethan playwright who wanted to characterize his hero as a daring man often gave him a speech or soliloquy rejecting Christian beliefs and principles, or showed him, in much the same way that the author of the Play of the Sacrament had done, praying to false Gods. The Elizabethans were intrigued, and rather pleasantly horrified, by the man who, like Tamburlaine, trusted only in himself. And so, just as the mystery and miracle-play audiences could judge a hero's character by listening to his devotions to Mahomet, the Elizabethans could partly estimate Faustus and Tamburlaine by their self-reliance, and Volpone by his prayer to his treasure. The Jew of Malta conspicuously takes all the credit for his gains.

However, even the heroes just mentioned would be hard-pressed to match the self-confidence of the hero of The Tragical Reign of Selimus (pr. 1594),[54] who rejects even Mahomet in his first soliloquy:

> Let Mahound's lawes be lockt up in their case
> And meaner men and of a baser spirit,
> In vertuous actions seeke for glorious merit.
> I count it sacriledge, for to be holy,
> Or reverence this thred-bare name of good.
> (sc. ii, 242-6)

The rejection of even "Mahound's" laws calls up reminiscences of the

mystery tradition.

The reason for the use of prayer, apostrophe, or pious soliloquy as a device for self-characterization may lie in the religious origins of the drama as well as in the religious consciousness of the English people. Secular playwrights probably characterized their heroes as pious because the mystery heroes had been holy, and many heroes may have been made to show evidence of their piety because this was the way it had been done, or was being done, in the mystery plays. Also, the characterization of a hero through his religion, or lack of it, came perhaps as naturally to the Elizabethans as to their predecessors, for Senecanism brought with it many gods, and the anti-Semitism of Shakespeare's age made it easy to base a man's villainy in his religion, hence Barabas and Shylock.

Prayers are usually private. But in the drama audiences are often supposed to "overhear" them and, as has been seen, this overhearing is often useful in hero build-up. So also is the "overheard thought" of the soliloquy. One or two soliloquies have already been mentioned, in connection with a hero's devotion to or rejection of a god. The first use of soliloquy or overheard thought in hero-characterization seems to be in Lyly's Sapho and Phao (1584), in which the hero begins the play by musing:

> Thou art a Ferriman, Phao, yet a free man, possessing for riches content, and for honors quiet. Thy thoughts are no higher than thy fortunes, nor thy desires greater than thy calling.

Gismund, in Robert Wilmot's Tancred and Gismund (pr. 1591), seems to be soliloquizing just after her first entrance with her maids, though in this "classical" play it is difficult to say whether she is declaiming to the chorus or thinking aloud. The latter may be the case, since she goes on to apostrophize her dead husband. At any rate, she contrives to tell in the course of this speech what she is -- a heart-broken widow.[55] The soliloquy of Selimus, hero of The Tragical Reign of Selimus, has already been mentioned. In this soliloquy of a hundred and fifty lines characterization of the hero is really confirmed rather than introduced, for Baiazet, Selimus' father, has already characterized "stearne Selimus" in a soliloquy of his own:

> ... Selmi followes warres in dismall strife,
> And snatcheth at my Crowne with greedy Clawes ... .
> (sc. i, 89-110)

The play which is often thought of as a source for Shakespeare's Richard III, The True Tragedie of Richard III, contains self-characterization by the hero in a soliloquy, in which Richard reveals the determination and ambition which are part of Shakespeare's hero's make-up:

> To be baser than a King I disdaine
> And to be more than Protector the law deny
> Why my father got the Crowne, my brother won the Crowne,
> And I will weare the Crowne,
> Or make them hop without their crownes that denies me.[56]

However, this self-characterization is really only confirmation of the character given Richard in the Prologue by the figure of Truth.

Shakespeare sends his hero-villain on-stage at the beginning

of Richard III with the self-characterizing soliloquy, "Now is the winter of our discontent ... ." There is no preliminary characterization of the hero, either by a Prologue or by any other means, and the striking appearance of the hump-backed Duke, halting out on to the apron stage, is counted on to hold the attention of the audience while they listen in to his thoughts. Sapho and Phao is, as far as can be seen, the only play in which there is direct precedent for such explicit self-characterization in a soliloquy. In The True Tragedie and in Selimus the hero is prepared for -- and almost completely characterized -- before he appears with his soliloquy. In Tancred and Gismund it is not clear whether the ranting declamations of the heroine are a soliloquy.

There are many other heroes in the Elizabethan drama who partly or wholly characterize themselves in soliloquy. The titular hero of The Scottish History of James the Fourth (pr. 1598) reveals his true, treacherous nature in a soliloquy soon after the start of the play.[57] Malevole, hero of Marston's The Malcontent (pr. 1604), shows his real self in a soliloquy the first time that he is left alone, and it might be said that these two self-revelations are complete and unprepared-for. However, the soliloquizing self-characterization of many heroes in the Elizabethan drama usually confirms preceding characterization. Guise, in Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris, confirms in his first soliloquy what the audience has already heard about him (sc. ii, 32-106). So do two other of Marlowe's leading characters, Doctor Faustus and the Jew of Malta. There is also some preliminary

characterization in a prologue (and, in fact, in the title of the play) for the hero of George Chapman's The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois before he characterizes himself, in soliloquy, as one who tries to make virtue his guide.[58]

The soliloquy is therefore much used as an aid to characterization of the hero. Hamlet, for instance, reveals a hitherto unknown but very important part of his nature in his first soliloquy (I, ii, 129-59). But the only complete characterizations of the hero in soliloquy in the drama of the period under study are in Sapho and Phao, Richard III, The Scottish History of James IV, and The Malcontent.

(4) Self-Characterization in Song.

Though many characters in the drama sing for and to themselves, there are a few plays in which characterization of the leading figure is accomplished through the use of song. Patient Grissil, the heroine of Phillip's play of that name, characterizes herself at her first entrance in a song which shows her piety and obedience.[59] The song is in fact a little sermon on virtue. Tom Tyler's song, in Tom Tyler and his Wife, is as much a characterizing as an identifying device. In Marston's The Dutch Courtezan there is more than a suggestion of self-characterization in Francischina's song, sung at her first appearance, "The dark is my delight" (I, ii), and in The Malcontent, by the same author, the hero's supposed madness is first suggested by "the vilest out of tune music being heard." This music is played by the hero himself.

(5) Unwitting Self-Characterization by the Hero.

It was assumed in a previous section that characters like Othello, the Insatiate Countess, or George A Green consciously tell what they are. They may do so spontaneously in an excited state, or under some sort of coercion, or a particular situation in the play may justify a certain amount of self-characterization, as in the cases of Leir, Lear, Volpone, Petruchio, and others. But this type of self-characterization is deliberate; the hero elects to tell what he is, or to reveal certain aspects of his character.

A hero may, however, characterize himself by his speech or actions and be unaware that he is doing so. There is of course the theatrical convention that no audience is present, and a character who speaks about himself in soliloquy or in prayer may in a sense be said to be revealing himself unwittingly. But under the heading of unwitting self-characterization or self-betrayal may fairly be placed those cases in which a dramatist attempts to make the hero show himself, unconsciously, as either less or more than he claims to be. The first, and many subsequent, uses of the technique are for unconscious self-betrayal.

It does not require a great deal of analytic skill to see that the mystery dramatists who made their tyrant-heroes, the Herods and the Pilates, loud boasters, were making these people betray themselves. The tyrants brag of their finery, but in the context finery denotes only vanity -- the Son of Man is set, "stripped, whipped, and bedrabbled," in contrast with a bewigged Herod. The audience

always knows where the centre of power rests; it is in the manger, in the upper room, on the cross, and the boasts of the tyrants in the plays of which they are "heroes" only reveal their own worldly vanity and their insecurity.

In short, in the mystery plays certain characters can be seen attempting to present one face to the world while actually presenting another. The dramatist uses the technique under discussion to persuade the audience that it knows more about the hero than the hero knows about himself. The audience often has to help the dramatist by using simple perception.

Swearing, as it is used in the Towneley "Death of Abel," a pageant in which Cain abuses his horses and his servant with his tongue as well as with his hand, is a simple device for showing that a character is a bad man. An example of a neat insertion of coarse language to relieve the audience of a slight doubt is seen in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (pr. 1594), a play which at the outset shows two young men, either of whom could be the romantic hero: the Prince and Lacy. When the Prince, in the course of the dialogue, swears by "Gog's wounds,"[61] it may mean that Lacy is to be the more sympathetic of the two, and he goes on to win the heroine. Heroes may use strong language, but only, like Othello, under great stress. The man who, early in the play and under no strain, resorts to swearing stamps himself, like Iago, as a bad character.

False modesty has no place on the stage, and the folk-play heroes, for example, who boast and then make good their boasts are

followed by a long line of successors who tell quite frankly what they can do, and prove it. But over-confidence and self-love are meant to be recognizable conditions in a number of plays in which the hero is to be detected as protesting too much, or is quickly shown to be unable to back up his claims. Johan Johan, hero of the play of that name, a play printed in 1533 and now attributed to Heywood, is an amusing example of a "hero" who betrays himself. His bragging speech recounting his own fearlessness as a husband, and rhapsodizing over the beating he intends to give his wife and her lover, is quite easily recognizable as bluster. Tyb slips in, unnoticed by her husband, during the speech, and at its conclusion quickly shows him in his true, brow-beaten character.[62] Exactly the same device is employed in Robert Wilson's The Cobler's Prophecy (pr. 1594): Raph the Cobler is a brave husband until his wife enters and frightens him into crawling under his stool.[63]

These two plays are comedies, and part of the fun consists in seeing the braggart smoked, like Parolles in All's Well that Ends Well. But in serious plays violent boasters, like violent swearers, are often suspect. In fact, bragging heroes are often found in plays of a homiletic or propagandizing nature, part of whose lesson is that vaunting comes before a fall, or that English (or Protestant) deeds are better than foreign (or Catholic) words. Examples of the homiletic type of play are The Interlude of Youth, Mundus et Infans, A Looking Glass for London[64] (pr. 1594), and even Doctor Faustus, all of whose heroes are first characterized as over-proud. The best

example of a propagandizing play in which the hero or heroine is obviously over-boastful is Dekker's Whore of Babylon,[65] in which the self-characterizing speech of the Empress of Babylon at the beginning of the play seems almost to be modelled upon the standard vaunt of the mystery Herod.

The showing-up of the hero out of his own mouth requires a certain amount of subtlety. Most dramatists who use the technique are usually content to make the deluded hero crudely self-laudatory in a manner glaringly apparent to all in the audience. Discussion of the technique would, in fact, end with the mention of Johan Johan, The Cobler's Prophecy, and the other plays just listed, if it were not for two other examples of unwitting self-characterization by heroes of late Elizabethan plays. A fairly crude case is found in William Alexander's Croesus,[66] and a much more subtle one in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

Alexander, apparently worried that the audience might not notice that Croesus is supposed to be giving himself away by building himself up too much, warns in the Prologue that the hero is "a world-bewitched man, who makes his gold his god." But even allowing for an audience conditioned to Senecan rant, Croesus' first speech is clearly one of self-betrayal:

> Who ever was so favoured by the fates
> As could like us of full contentment boast,
> Loved of mine owne, and feared of foraine states,
> I know not what it is for to be crost
> . . . . . .
> The darling of heaven, the minion of fortune
> I wot not what to wish I have so much.

Shakespeare appears to demand a good deal more discrimination from his audience when he makes Julius Caesar betray himself. His procedure is this: when others speak of Caesar he is usually the Julius Caesar of history -- Cassius denigrates him, but is obviously biassed -- but when Caesar speaks himself, and especially when he speaks about himself, he shows himself, unwittingly, to be egotistical to the point of self-worship. When Caesar says, "I rather tell thee what is to be feared / Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar," he is ostensibly telling Antony who and what he is. One wonders why he feels it necessary to do so -- Antony knows him well enough. In reality Caesar is making the statement, "... I am Caesar," to no one in particular and is, I believe, betraying himself as a man who has constructed, and is bowing down to, an image of himself. Like the Herod of the mystery plays, who also has to keep telling people who he is, in just the same way, "I am Herod," Caesar seems to be meant to betray himself as a hero who is keeping up a brave front. Two lines after he makes the statement in question, Caesar is moving off-stage, and the audience is left with the declamation ringing in its ears.

No evidence can be found of a hero unwittingly characterizing himself as greater than he thinks he is. Those who elect to build themselves up generally leave nothing unsaid. The folk-heroes boldly give their records, putting forward claims which they then proceed to make good. God does the same in the mysteries, and so does Christ when he says, "I am the light of the world." Othello,

being pressed, tells what he has done -- tells, that is, everything that he knows about himself. The number of other devices which Shakespeare uses to round out the characterization of Othello probably constitute proof of the limitations of self-characterization, especially with a controversial (in this case a Negro) hero. Heroes can tell what they know about themselves,but obviously this information is, in the later dramas of Shakespeare at any rate, not enough.

It was said above that William Alexander may have been worried that his audience for Croesus might not notice that Croesus is supposed to be giving himself away. To the discussion of self-betrayal by the hero may be added some examples of how dramatists supplemented self-description so as to leave the audience in no doubt as to the worth of the self-assessments made by some heroes. Apart from the Prologue warning, a minor character is often made to comment directly upon the hero's self-laudatory remarks. Matthew Merrygreek, the vice in Ralph Roister Doister (pr. 1566), has already characterized the hero as a braggart and a moonstruck lover before Ralph enters, and he makes an evaluation of the hero's opening words:

> Ralph. Why did God make me such a goodly person?
> Matt. He is in, by the week, we shall have sport anon. Aside[67]

Treasure, heroine of The Trial of Treasure, characterizes herself to Lust and Inclination:

> Treasure is pleasure, bear that in mind;
> Both trusty and true ye shall me always find.

But Inclination adds, aside, "As trusty as a quick eel by the tail."[68]

Ragan, the servant of Esau in The History of Jacob and Esau (pr. 1568),

has a parting shot which adds a salutary touch of bathos to the boasts of his master, the self-styled mighty hunter. Esau makes a good deal of noise about his own prowess in the field, and finally rushes off to hunt for the big game that he has been talking about:

> Esau. Come on, now let us go. God send us game and luck,
> And if my hand serve me well --
> Ragan. (aside) Ye will kill a duck. [69]
> Exit.

In Jack Straw (pr. 1594), Wat Tyler is praising himself and his fellow-rebels, who include the titular hero and who contentedly listen to this flattery. Nobs, a boy, is the voice of reality:

> Wat Tyler. We are here four captains just, Jack Straw, Wat Tyler, Hob Carter, and Tom Miller. Search me all England, and find four such captains, and by Gog's blood, I'll be hanged.
> Nobs. So you will be, nevertheless, I stand in grave doubt. Aside[70]

Lorenzo, in Chapman's May-Day, tells the audience that though he is old he still has his youthful powers and desires. But Angelo, a servant, says in an aside, "I wonder what made this May morning so cold, and now I see 'tis this January that intrudes into it" (I,i, 26-8). When Lorenzo calls attention to his attractive appearance, Angelo comments, "A notable old whinyard" (I, i, 45-51) -- a proof of the power of the aside over even direct address to the audience. These examples might well go into a subsequent section of this study, that on the credentials of characters who comment upon the hero, but they are adduced here to show how dramatists were rather uncertain of the ability of their audiences to see through even the most fulsome self-

praise from heroes. This uncertainty makes Shakespeare's confidence in the understanding of his audience for Julius Caesar all the more striking.

(6) Conclusion.

In this chapter it has been seen that self-characterization by the hero in the drama of the period under study is often so brief as to be inseparable from self-identification. It has also been seen that the hero often characterizes himself directly to the audience, though this technique generally fell into disuse after about 1562 (the date of the printing of Jack Juggler), being revived, to my knowledge, only by George Chapman, in The Blind Beggar of Alexandria, to solve the problem of characterizing a hero who appears as four different persons during the course of the play. A good many heroes characterize themselves to other persons in the play, and pretexts were devised to make such self-characterization natural, interesting, and even exciting. A few heroes and heroines are wholly or partly self-characterized in songs. Soliloquy and apostrophe or prayer are extensively used in self-characterization throughout the period, and in some cases heroes can be seen betraying themselves while building themselves up.

The question to which the discussion of self-characterization of heroes in English drama leads is, "Can the hero build himself up successfully?" Obviously, the more sophisticated the drama becomes, the less is this technique acceptable as the only method of showing

the hero's quality. The progression from folk-play to Shakespearean drama shows a decline in the use of the technique for heroes of any stature, and the daring use of "overheard" self-characterization to show the hero's nature completely in Richard III is successful simply because it is daring. In addition, Richard is a simple character, not far removed from a morality Vice, and "simple" is the adjective which also describes those other heroes in the professional drama whose characterization is mainly self-done -- Petruchio and Volpone are examples. More complicated characters may reveal certain sides, even important sides, of their natures, but even the often-astonishing self-appraisal conventional on the Elizabethan stage is not enough to characterize them completely. When one looks forward from the folk-plays, rather than backward from Ibsen, it is not surprising that many characters in the Elizabethan drama tell their stories rather than act them, but it is also no surprise that the greatest Shakespearean hero to build himself up completely is a hero with a great deal of the old Vice in him.

Footnotes: Chapter II

[1] Oxfordshire St. George Play, in J. M. Manly, Specimens of the Pre-Shakesperean Drama (Boston, 1897), I, pp. 289-92. Manly's collection is hereinafter referred to as Specimens.

[2] E. K. Chambers, The English Folk-Play (Oxford, 1933), pp. 6-9.

[3] Ibid., p. 6. See also Ibid., p. 25.

[4] There is also a non-cycle Creation play from Norwich.

[5] All references to the Ludus-Coventriae are to J. O. Halliwell's edition (London, 1841), and the numbering and spelling followed are those of the editor.

[6] Wisdom, in The Macro Plays, ed. F. J. Furnivall and A. W. Pollard (London, 1904), p. 35.

[7] Specimens, I.

[8] Specimens, I.

[9] Specimens, I. It is difficult to ascertain exact dates for the writing of many English plays. All dates given here as printed (pr.) are taken from W. W. Greg's Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration (London, 1939). The date at which a play was printed may often be far removed from the date at which that play was written or first performed, but one is often helpless to ascertain the last two facts. When dates are not derived from Greg, the sources of them will be noted.

[10] Lusty Juventus, in Dodsley's Old English Plays, ed. W. C. Hazlitt (London, 1874), II. This collection is hereinafter referred to as Dodsley.

[11] Specimens, I. The date, 1536, is given as a certain one for the play's existence by J. W. Harris, in John Bale (Urbana, Illinois, 1940), p. 71.

[12] Tom Tyler and His Wife, ed. G. C. Moore Smith and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1910).

[13] The English Folk-Play, p. 162.

[14] All references to the York plays are to Lucy Toulmin Smith's edition (Oxford, 1885).

[15] All references to the Chester plays are to the T. Wright edition (London, 1843).

[16] John Skelton, Magnyfycence, ed. R. L. Ramsay (London, 1906).

[17] The Comedy of George A Green, ed. F. W. Clarke and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911), ll. 102-4.

[18] John Lyly, Sappho and Phao, in Works, ed. R. W. Bond Oxford, 1902), II.

[19] Shakespeare Studies (New York, 1927), pp. 363-6. The quoted passage is from page 364.

[20] Character Problems in Shakespeare, transl. W. H. Peters (London, 1922).

[21] William Archer still has influence, and Stoll can remark that, "In [the Elizabethan age] the dramatist, if so disposed, would not have dared to risk the puzzling of mens' wits as only an Ibsen dared -- and puzzled them -- at the close of the century gone by" (Shakespeare Studies, p. 365).

[22] The English Folk-Play, p. 25.

[23] Other examples are the York "Joseph's Trouble" and "Abraham's Sacrifice."

[24] Specimens, I.

[25] Henry Medwall, Fulgens and Lucres, ed. F. S. Boas and A. W. Reed, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1926), 201-57. The date is that conjectured by the editors.

[26] Calisto and Melebea, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1908), ll. 16-19.

[27] Jack Juggler, in Dodsley, II.

[28] Some of these pageants are: The Towneley "Caesar Augustus," "The Conspiracy;" the York "Dream of Pilate's Wife," "Massacre of the Innocents," "Coming of the Three Kings to Herod;" the Ludus Coventriae "Council of the Jews," "King Herod," and "The Slaughter of the Innocents."

[29] John Baptist's Preaching, in John Bale, Dramatic Writings, ed. Farmer (London, 1907), reproduced in Three Centuries of Drama, ed. H. W. Wells, microprint (New York, 1955), I. Wells' microprint collection is hereinafter referred to as Three Centuries of Drama.

[30] Dodsley, II, p. 6.

[31] Dodsley, III, p. 228.

[32] Dodsley, IV, pp. 167-8.

[33] Three Centuries of Drama, I.

[34] Appius and Virginia, ed. R. B. McKerrow, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1911), ll. 82-102.

[35] See note 17, this chapter.

[36] Henslowe's Diary, p. 21.

[37] Robert Greene, The History of Orlando Furioso, ed. W.W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1907).

[38] Reproduced in Three Centuries of Drama, I.

[39] Virtuous Octavia, ed. R. B. McKerrow, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1909).

[40] Dodsley, II, p. 7.

[41] The case of Julius Caesar should also be considered in this connection. The audience is not expecting the type of man that Shakespeare envisages Caesar to be.

[42] cf. A. C. Sprague, Shakespeare and the Audience (Cambridge, Mass, 1935), pp. 62-7.

[43] The one exception is the Dublin Abraham.

[44] All references to the Towneley plays are to A. W. Pollard's edition (London, 1907).

[45] Specimens, I.

[46] The Castle of Perseverance, in The Macro Plays, ed. F. J. Furnivall and A. W. Pollard (London, 1904).

[47] Mary Magdalene, in The Digby Plays, ed. F. J. Furnivall (London, 1882), ll. 93-100.

[48] Dodsley, II, p. 163.

[49] John Phillip, Patient Grissil, ed. R. B. McKerrow and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1909). The date given is that of the play's entry in the Stationers' Register.

[50] The True Chronicle History of King Leir, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1907).

[51] George Peele, Edward I, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911).

[52] Dodsley, VI, p. 507.

53 If You Know Not Me, ed. M. Doran and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1934), l.48. This play was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1605.

54 The Tragical Reign of Selimus, ed. W. Bang, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1908).

55 Robert Wilmot, Tancred and Gismund, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1914), I, ii, 90-133.

56 The True Tragedie of Richard the Third, repr. in the New Variorum ed. of Richard III, ed. H. J. Furness, Jr. (Philadelphia, 1908), p. 514.

57 The Scottish History of James the Fourth, ed. A. E. H. Swaen and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1921), l. 196f.

58 George Chapman, The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, in Best Plays, ed. W. L. Phelps (London and New York, 1895), pp. 127-8.

59 John Phillip, Patient Grissil, ed. R. B. McKerrow and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1909), ll. 219-66.

60 cf. F. M. Salter, Introduction to The Trial and Flagellation, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1935), p. 27.

61 Robert Greene, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1926), l. 680.

62 Johan Johan, in J. Q. Adams, ed., Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), pp. 385-6.

63 Robert Wilson, The Cobler's Prophecy, ed. A. C. Wood, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1914), ll. 68-77.

64 Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, A Looking Glass for London and England, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1932).

65 I, i, 1-20.

[66] In Three Centuries of English Drama.

[67] Dodsley, III, 60.

[68] Dodsley, III, 288.

[69] Dodsley, II, 194.

[70] Dodsley, V, 386.

Chapter III

THE USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VARIOUS CHARACTERS OR TYPES IN HERO-CHARACTERIZATION

It has been seen that English audiences appear to have been schooled in recognizing, with some assistance, empty bragging or exaggeration. The earliest audiences learned to doubt the bragging of Herod and Pilate. But within certain limits -- and I have tried to indicate these limits in the section on hero self-betrayal by showing heroes who appear to step outside them -- a hero's own description of himself, when he gives one, is to be believed. Hero build-up from the mouths of other characters is also to be believed. Lily B. Campbell's statement about Shakespeare's technique is generally applicable to all the dramatists covered in this study. She says:

> Unless I am greatly mistaken, Shakespeare never trifled with his audience ... ; instead, every character in a Shakespearean play is engaged in saying exactly what Shakespeare wanted the audience to know and in saying it over and over again. If a man is a villain, he says so, and everyone else says so. It is quite safe to trust the characters to tell the truth about themselves.[1]

However, certain characters or character-types are used frequently by many different dramatists to speak all or some of the lines which characterize the hero. While the frequency with which a certain character is made to speak hero build-up does not necessarily mean that the build-up is effective, it appears that

dramatists used and re-used certain types because they thought that hero-characterization coming from these types would make a strong impression.

(1) Hero Build-up by God.

An audience, especially an audience at a mystery play, is compelled to believe whatever it is told by a character representing God. Some of the earliest hero build-up consisted wholly or in part of God's comments upon the character of the hero. Mary, the Mother of God, is the heroine of "The Salutation and Conception" in the Ludus Coventriae, and before her appearance both God the Father and Christ characterize her. The Father calls Mary "a mayd ffre ... that xal al restore."[2] The Son says that,

> She is withowte wo and ful of grace,
> And ... I the son of the Godhead of here xal be bore
> I have ... grett hast to be man thore,
> In that mekest and purest virgyne.[3]

This build-up must have been extremely effective. In some other mysteries the same idea is used. God refers to the hero of the Newcastle "Noah's Ark" as "Noah, my darling free."[4] The Dublin play of Abraham and Isaac is different from all other mystery plays on the subject in that, for one thing, the greatest part of the characterization of Abraham is done, not by the hero himself in prayer or soliloquy, but by God. God says that mankind has displeased Him,

> But ȝit siþ he hath displesid me, I have made purviance
> þat a modre of hys kynd shal plese me a yeyne,
> þe which haþ ever be my servaunt in al manere observaunce:

> Abraham is his name, my man þat cannot feyne,
> But evyr hathe be trewe.[5]

In the Towneley "Annunciation" God again speaks of Mary as a "madyn fre" (l. 40), "swete" (l. 68), "my lemman" (l. 65), and as one who is to be "blyssyd withouten ende" (l. 75).[6] Hero build-up may be taking second place to Roman Catholic doctrine here, but it is still effective hero build-up.

Everyman contains a certain amount of hero-characterization by God, for the sins attributed to mankind by God are the sins of the representative Everyman. But there are no instances of the hero of a secular play being built up by the Deity. Even the mediaeval religious dramatists, in fact, appear to have used this technique sparingly, and at least one of them seems to have had a keen sense of its effectiveness. This is the author of the Digby Conversion of St. Paul, in which no less a personage than Christ himself is brought on-stage to testify to the completeness of the change in the converted hero, and to assure Ananias that Saul is now, "A meke lamb, that a wolf before was named."[7] The author of the Conversion obviously knew that characterization by God or Christ was, in his day, the most effective kind.

(2) Hero Build-up by the Gods.

Although there are no instances of hero build-up by God in the secular drama, it might be thought that the mystery technique outlined above would have established some sort of precedent for hero build-up

by one or other of the pagan gods so common on the Elizabethan stage. I can find only three plays in which such a device is used, however, though it is fairly common in masques.

George Peele makes some use of the device in his Arraignment of Paris (pr. 1584), a play which is influenced by the masque. Ate, speaking the prologue, gives some characterization of Paris "the sheepeherde swaine ... , th' unhappie organ of the Greekes."[8] In Alphonsus, King of Aragon (pr. 1599), Venus is "let downe from the top of the Stage" at the beginning of the first act to praise and prepare for the hero.

> What man alive or now amongst the Ghoasts
> Could countervaile his courage and his strength?,[9]

she asks, and laments that Virgil is not alive to sing adequately Alphonsus' deeds. The rant of this build-up is matched in William Alexander's Tragedy of Julius Caesar (pr. 1607), an example of English Seneca whose whole first act consists of a declamation by Juno, who outlines her own power and then asserts that her ease, as well as the ease of the other gods, is disturbed by the ambition, pride, and prowess of Caesar, who

> ...may (if forcing thus the world's chiefe forts)
> More powerful than the Titans scale the skies.[10]

(3) Hero Build-up by Saints.

The mystery dramatists had well-known Biblical authority for John the Baptist's characterization of Christ as "One whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose," and this statement is part of the build-

up for Christ in the Towneley plays[11] and the Ludus Coventriae.[12] In the context of the complete cycles the prophet plays, or "Prophetae," are a kind of extended build-up of the main hero, Christ, in which a long procession of kings, prophets, and saints testify to the greatness of the Messiah as well as to the certainty of His coming.

(4) Hero Build-up by Angels, Ghosts, and the Devil.

The angel in the Annunciation pageants of the mystery cycles, who greets Mary as "full of grace," and the angels who sing in the Nativity plays are building-up a heroine or a hero, as well as contributing to the pageantry of the scenes. Angels confine their appearances to the mysteries, but minor supernatural beings did not depart altogether from English drama with the mystery angels. But though these other supernatural beings -- ghosts, are fairly common on the stage, only one of them has a characterizing function. The spirit of Francis Guicchiardini explains a dumb show at the beginning of The Divil's Charter (pr. 1607), by Barnabe Barnes. The dumb show is itself a method, though an obscure one, of characterizing the hero-villain, Pope Alexander VI, and the ghost, interpreting the show, describes Alexander as "faithlesse, fearlesse and ambitious."[13]

The devil is another "supernatural" character who frequently appears in the religious drama. Ironically, when he is given the function of characterizing heroes, his words are usually accurate. In the Digby Mary Magdalene, for example, he describes Mary, before her fall, as a woman of worship, which is true. In the Chester

"Woman Taken in Adultery" he is found admitting that Christ is without sin. Such testimonies as these from the fiend himself are effective additions to the stature of Mary and Christ, and the Digby example is an instance of a technique which I believe is not found again until Shakespeare -- the idea of having the villain praise his victim, as Iago praises Othello, for example.[14] Obviously, a grudging admission of the hero's goodness made by the hero's known enemy is very effective hero build-up. It is unlooked-for and therefore striking.

One heroine in the secular drama is supposed to be so godly that this technique of having the Old Enemy himself build her up is used to enforce the idea of her virtue. She is Susanna, in Thomas Garter's The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna, a play possibly written before 1563.[15] Satan says that Susanna is an affront to him, for

> She serveth God and on him sets,
> Her study and her care.[16]

There are no more instances of hero build-up by the devil, but the idea of using a very bad person to characterize a good one, or of making the hero's enemies speak well of him, occurs again. In the Interlude of Johan the Evangelist, written about 1565,[17] Eugenio, a decidedly loose and sinful person, is made to speak well of Johan.[18] Shakespeare emphasizes a hero's worth by making his enemy speak well of him, in Romeo and Juliet, where Capulet tells Tybalt to

> let [Romeo] alone,
> 'A bears him like a portly gentleman;
> And, to say truth, Verona brags of him

To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth.
(I, v, 67-70)

In Othello, Iago is first characterized, by his lewdness, filthy language, and confession of hypocrisy, as a bad man, a villain. Iago's enmity towards Othello is also quickly established. Then in a soliloquy at the end of the first act -- and in soliloquies characters must be assumed to be telling the truth -- this enemy and villain praises the hero:

The Moor is of a free and open nature.
(I, iii, 405)

This admission completes all the characterization necessary for the play, though Iago continues at various times throughout to praise the hero. It confirms all that the audience has be now fairly well come to believe for itself, that Othello is a good man. The confirmation of the audience's suspicions in this soliloquy is done in part by using the two techniques which have just been discussed: the use of a very bad character to build up a good one, and the use of emphatic praise from the lips of a known enemy. Shakespeare could have found the first idea in the mysteries, in the Devil's praise of Christ, and the idea is, as indicated, also used in Godly Susanna. The second idea may be Shakespeare's own, for he is the first to use it in clear-cut fashion, in Romeo and Juliet. This second idea is close to, though not exactly the same as, that theme peculiar to Shakespearean tragedy -- the praise of the victim by the person who means to destroy him. Iago praises Othello as Edmund praises Edgar,[19] Macbeth Duncan,[20] Brutus Caesar.[21]

I have said that by the time Iago delivers his soliloquy at the end of Act One, the audience has fairly well come to the conclusion that Othello is a good man. This belief has not come about accidentally, and here it seems advantageous to explain why. The audience is practically forced to Othello's side by Iago's foul-mouthed presentation of whatever case he (Iago) has. His oaths, his reference to the "thick-lips," and his allegation to Brabantio that Desdemona is being "tupped," all throw the audience's sympathies to the man who is being slandered. There may be a faint foreshadowing of this technique in the first scene of The First Part of Tamburlaine, where the hero is called a thief and wicked barbarian by Mycetes and his court. The allegations are actually true enough, but coming from this band of luxurious courtiers and their silly king they have the effect of persuading the audience to wait and see. There is, however, no doubt about what Shakespeare is doing in Othello.

In this discussion, I have traced the technique of making the devil speak hero build-up, and shown how this and a closely allied technique, that of making professed enemies speak well of the hero, are used by Shakespeare late in his career. After Othello I find one play which has hero build-up by an enemy with the intentional effect of conveying an impression opposite to that meant by the person doing the characterizing. This play is Dekker's propagandizing work The Whore of Babylon, in which the actual heroine is Queen Elizabeth, who is defamed by the Empress of Babylon.[22] The latter is the Roman

Catholic Church personified, and, though she may owe her flashy appearance to Spenser's portrait of Duessa, she has all the traits of a mystery-play devil. Her words, when she defames the heroine, are obviously to be understood inversely.

(5) Hero Build-up by Kings.

A king is usually an impressive figure on stage, especially in the period under discussion, and especially when he is obviously in command of himself and of the situation, unlike, say, Mycetes in Tamburlaine. When the king is not the hero, he makes an excellent mouthpiece for hero build-up -- an idea recognized and used as early as the Towneley "Offering of the Magi," in which the three kings build up the Christ-child. This technique is also used in a number of secular plays up to the time of Shakespeare's death. Outside of Shakespeare, it is seen in Marlowe's Massacre at Paris (1589-93), in which the King of Navarre helps to characterize the hero-villain, the Duke of Guise;[23] in John of Bordeaux (1590-93) when John first appears with the Emperor, who praises him for a brave and loyal soldier;[24] in Edward the First (pr. 1593), by George Peele, in which the hero is built up by his mother, the Queen;[25] and in the First Part of Jeronimo, where Jeronimo is first seen being rewarded for his meritorious services by an appreciative monarch.[26] In Shakespeare, it is Henry IV, the titular hero of Henry the Fourth, Part One, who characterizes the two young men who actually compete for the audience's affections as hero of the play. Shakespeare follows Holinshead very

closely, and the rather puzzling result is that the king builds up Hotspur at the expense of Prince Henry. On the basis of hero build-up, Hotspur is the hero of this play. In All's Well that Ends Well, it is the King of France who expresses, with excellent judgement, both hopes for and doubts about Bertram:

> Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face.
> Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
> Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts
> Mayst thou inherit too!
>
> (I, ii, 19-22)

Then, in Macbeth, the gracious Duncan sums up Macbeth's virtue:

> Thou art so far before
> That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
> To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
> That the proportion of both thanks and payment
> Might have been mine! Only I have left to say
> More is thy due than more than all can pay.
>
> (I, iv, 14-21)

No other dramatist of the period studied here makes a king speak in this way about a hero -- and be wrong. Shakespeare is lacing hero build-up with dramatic irony.

(6) Hero Build-up by Nobles, Old People.

Audiences appear to have been expected to pay attention to and believe hero-characterization spoken by old people, especially noble or saintly old people. Shakespeare often uses old men as truthful voices commenting upon the action of a play, as in Richard III (II, iii), where the Third Citizen is clearly venerable,[27] and in Macbeth (II, iv).

Joachim and Anna, old and saintly people, make effective

witnesses to the goodness of Mary in the Ludus Coventriae's "Mary's Betrothment," even though they are the heroine's parents. In fact, a good word from a parent is in many cases considered good build-up. Fulgens, who is himself characterized as a noble old man in Fulgens and Lucres, tells the audience that he has a daughter, Lucres, in whom he delights, who is the chief comfort of his old age, and who is virtuous, discreet, and beautiful.[28] In Phillip's Patient Grissil, Janicle, the heroine's father, praises Grissil for being her "parents' only staye, and staffe of their comfort" by reason of her virtue, prudence, and industry.[29] Virginius, father of the heroine of Appius and Virginia, is another old parent who speaks fulsomely, yet correctly, about his daughter early in the play. Virginia is in his eyes

> A virgin pure, an imp of heavenly race.
> Both sober, meek and modest too, and virtuous in like case.[30]

It is Elinor, the Queen Mother who, as mentioned above, builds up the hero of Peele's Edward the First, and here queenship, motherhood, age, and patriotic fervour are marshalled to convince the audience of Edward's worthiness as she begins by apostrophising "Illustrious England, auncient seat of kings," and goes on to praise "lovely Edward," whose manliness is admired throughout the world.[31] There is, it would appear, no arguing with aged parents when they build up their children, at least not as long as these parents appear to have their wits about them.

Thomas of Woodstock, the "alternate" hero of The First Part of

the Reign of Richard II or Thomas of Woodstock, is built up by two noble old men, the Dukes of York and Lancaster. York calls him:

> [my] good brother woodstocke,
> Playne Thomas, for bith rood so all men call hime
> For his playne dealing, & his simple clothing.
> Let others Iett in silcke & gould sayes hee
> A coate of english freese, best pleaseth me.[32]

Both the heroes of the title are succinctly characterized in Lancaster's apostrophe to the absent Woodstock:

> A heavey charge good woodstocke hast thou had
> To be protector to so wild a prince.[33]

Dunstan, an elderly counsellor in A Knack to Know a Knave (pr. 1594), builds up the hero, King Edgar, in the play's first scene:

> England hath just care to praise the Lord,
> That sent so good a king to govern them.[34]

Some old men of antiquity apparently had reputations for wisdom or good counsel, so that a commendatory speech from one of them in a play makes effective build-up. Thus Chapman, in Caesar and Pompey (pr. 1607), shows two leaders who are equally powerful, and differentiates between them through Cato, the wise senator, whose credentials hardly needed to be established, especially since everyone on stage hangs upon his words in the way that the audience is obviously supposed to do. Cato points out that Caesar's worth can be seen in his choice of followers, and says that Caesar's men are

> Imposters, flatterers, Favourites, and Bawds,
> Buffoons, Intelligencers, select wits;
> Close Murtherers, Mountebanckes, and declared Thieves,
> All these chosen by him to be his bodyguard.[35]

But Pompey, Cato goes on, is a lover of his country. In Alexander's

Croesus it is Solon who has the opening lines, and the audience hears this famous statesman call Croesus, "A world-bewitched man who makes his gold his god."[36]

Shakespeare is therefore using a tried technique when he makes Capulet praise Romeo for bearing himself like a portly gentleman. Capulet is not only an enemy making an admission of fact, but a man whose age (which he has just been underlining in conversation with a relative) gives weight to his words. The archbishops who speak well of Henry V are not young men, Duncan is an old king, the Countess of Rousillon praises Helena, and so does Lafeu.

Old men and nobles, when they are not prejudiced, or corrupt like Pandar, are common and effective vehicles for hero build-up in the English drama from the mysteries to Shakespeare.

(7) Hero Build-up by Personifications.

The personified Death, to whose words the mediaeval audience must have attended as closely as they did to God's, helps to fill out God's characterization of Everyman:

> His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure.
> (l. 82)

But in only one other play before the death of Shakespeare is there a striking use of a personified figure for hero build-up. The play is The True Tragedie of Richard the Third. Two personifications and the ghost of Clarence enter to open the play, and one of them, Poetry, asks, "What manner of man was this Richard Duke of Gloster?" The

reply is:

> A man ill shaped, crooked backed, lame armed, withall
> Valiantly minded, but tyrannous in authoritie.[37]

The audience can hardly doubt this characterization, for the speaker is Truth.

(8) Hero Build-up by Messengers.

A messenger is sometimes used for the purpose of hero build-up. In the Chester "History of Abraham" a messenger comes to Melchisadeck, King of Salem, to tell him of Abraham's victory, and he speaks of Abraham's bravery and piety:

> Abraham hath slayne in feighte
> Fower kinges, since he wente;
> . . . . .
> I harde hym thanke God allmighte
> Of grace he had hym sente.[38]

Melchisadeck takes up the praise of the hero in a manner which makes this part of the pageant reminiscent of the "bleeding sergeant" scene in Macbeth. In Lusty Juventus the Prologue is a messenger, and he characterizes the hero while announcing the theme and the moral of the play.[39] The bleeding sergeant in Macbeth may be badly wounded and badly out of breath, but he manages to inject into his report a good deal of praise of the hero, and Duncan lets him speak, or rather Shakespeare makes him speak, to add force and authenticity to the build-up of Macbeth by having it come from one who can ill afford the effort, and to make the build-up as exciting as possible. A good contrast with this scene is the first scene of Henry IV, Part One,

in which "Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse" is the messenger, bringing news of a battle and praise of Hotspur. But Sir Walter does not say a word. The king gives his message for him and goes on to draw the comparison, which only the king can draw and which is more forceful coming from him, between Hotspur and Hal.

In general, messengers are mainly used for hero-characterization in the sense that, when the hero is a king or a leader, they add to the audience's idea of his importance by bustling around. M.H. Marshall, writing of Herod in the mystery plays, points out this fact:

> The bustle of messengers is simply one of the ways in which the court of Herod, and Herod himself, are made to seem elegant and important.[40]

However, since they are usually excited, or come at exciting points of a play, messengers can hardly be suspected of lying, so that when they do give characterization it is generally correct, though it may be limited.

(9) Hero Build-up by Poor Men.

The effectiveness of kings as mouthpieces for hero build-up has been discussed above. Few dramatists use people from the opposite end of the social scale to characterize a hero. The Towneley "Second Shepherds' Play" has an excellent piece of characterization for Mak, and it comes from the lips of a poor man, a shepherd. But Mak, for all his gusto and appeal, is not strictly the hero of this Nativity play. Besides, the person who characterizes Mak in the shrewd observation, "Is he come? Then ilkone take heed to his thing" (l. 200), is

higher in the social scale than is the unemployed sheep-stealer.

The two men, A and B, who characterize Fulgens and, in effect, act as Prologues to Fulgens and Lucres, are poor men. But commoners, unless they are messengers or have some other important function, are not used very much for hero build-up. There is, however, one outstanding example of an aristocratic hero being fully characterized by commoners. The presentation of Shakespeare's Coriolanus is quite adequately done by the mutinous citizens in I, i. The Second Citizen presents the hero's virtues, the First Citizen his faults, and Caius Marcius is characterized in a lively little debate. Both sides are right, and the characterization is quickly confirmed. If this mob is rather too reasonable, it is because Shakespeare has given them the important function of building up the hero. It would appear as well that a crowd of commoners is more dependable as characterizers of the hero when they are against him rather than for him, as at the beginning of Julius Caesar. Yet the crowd of citizens in I, i of Julius Caesar suggest Caesar's importance very well.

(10) Hero Build-up by means of the Heroine's Choice.

In a few plays the heroine characterizes the hero after she herself has been introduced. It seems certain that the expressed opinion of a beautiful woman was considered effective hero-characterization. In Calisto and Melebea (pr. 1530), for example, Melebea characterizes the hero as a worthy enough fellow, but a doting lover and something of a pest.[41] Polynesta, the witty heroine

of Supposes (1566),[42] has accepted Erostrato as her lover before the play begins, and she speaks highly of Erostrato's birth and accomplishments in the first scene of Act One. The hero of The Weakest Goeth to the Wall (pr. 1600), Ferdinand or Frederick, is the subject of a speech of praise by Odillia, the heroine:

> I never saw him exercise himselfe
> In any place where I my selfe was present,
> But with such a gracefull modest bashfulnesse,
> As well beseemed both his youth and dutie.[43]

Lacy, hero of Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday (1600), is the subject of an even more charming speech by Rose, the heroine of that play (I, ii, 1-16). In Wily Beguiled (pr. 1606), Sophos, a scholar, is partly characterized by his name, and built up before his entrance by Lelia, who confesses to her nurse that "sweet Sophos is the man" whom she loves.[44] In Orlando Furioso, the hero is chosen from other suitors by Angelica (I, i, 148-69).

Shakespeare uses the technique of building up the hero by showing him chosen or praised by the heroine. And Shakespeare's heroines are usually so striking that no one doubts their ability to choose correctly, or lay their affections in a worthy place. An audience watching All's Well may often dislike young Bertram, but Helena loves him, and has chosen him, and she is not a silly girl. An important part of the careful build-up of Othello as a heroic figure, though black, is Desdemona's forthright statement, "Here's my husband." There seems to be little doubt that Shakespeare liked the idea of distinguishing a good man by having him chosen by a good woman, for he uses it again in Cymbeline, in connection with one of

his most appealing heroines, Imogen. Cymbeline is of course the titular hero of this play, but practically all the hero build-up is given to Posthumus. Two anonymous gentlemen, truthful minor characters, praise him highly in the play's opening lines and finally, in words which characterize both Posthumus and Imogen, they conclude:

> To his mistress,
> For whom he now is banished, her own price
> Proclaims how she esteemed him and his virtue.
> By her election may be truly read
> What kind of man he is.
>
> (I, i, 50-54)

Heroines are not only believable, but very effective, people to use as instruments for hero build-up.

(11) Conclusion.

Certain stage types have been seen to be useful and frequently-used vehicles for hero build-up. It is my assumption that audiences tended to accept without question the words of certain figures, and that hero build-up by God, or a king, or a saint, or a noble old man, or a beautiful heroine greatly enhanced the stature of the hero. Shakespeare has been seen modifying and making more effective an old technique. It is difficult, if not impossible, to codify the technique of this dramatist, for his irony colours his technique. Thus when Duncan builds up Macbeth the situation is not simply that of a king building up a hero. Tragic irony is present. When the Bishop and Archbishop build up Henry V they are not simply holy men testifying to the worth of a good man, for there is at least a touch of irony in Shakespeare's portrait of them.

Footnotes: Chapter III

[1] Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes (Cambridge, 1936), p. 112.

[2] Ludus Coventriae, p. 111.

[3] Ibid., p. 111.

[4] Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, ed. O. Waterhouse (London, 1909), p. 19, l. 11.

[5] Ibid., p. 26, ll. 9-13.

[6] The Towneley Plays, pp. 86-97.

[7] Specimens, p. 223.

[8] The Arraignment of Paris, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1910), ll. 16-17. In the introduction (p. v) Greg quotes Nashe's statement that Peele is the author of this play.

[9] Alphonsus, King of Aragon, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1926), sc. i, 29-30.

[10] The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, in Three Centuries of Drama, I; I, i.

[11] "John the Baptist," ll. 49-50.

[12] "The Baptism of Christ," p. 200.

[13] The Divil's Charter, in Three Centuries of Drama, I; I, i.

[14] In the Bible and in the mysteries, Pilate and the Centurion praise Christ. See, for example, Ludus Coventriae, p. 313, p. 331.

[15] Godly Susanna, ed. B. Ifor Evans and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1936), p. v.

[16] Ibid., ll. 80-81.

[17] The Interlude of Johan The Evangelist, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (London, 1907), p. vi.

[18] Ibid., l. 320f.

[19] King Lear, I, iii, 195-8.

[20] Macbeth, I, vii, 16-20.

[21] Julius Caesar, II, i, 19-21.

[22] The Whore of Babylon, in Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. F. T. Bowers (Cambridge, 1955), I, i.

[23] ll. 27-57.

[24] John of Bordeaux, ed. W. L. Renwick, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1935), ll. 4-9.

[25] Edward the First, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911), ll. 16-45.

[26] The First Part of Jeronimo, in The Works of Thomas Kyd, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1901), I, i, 1-21.

[27] He is addressed as "Sir" by the First Citizen.

[28] Fulgens and Lucres, ll. 251-70.

[29] Patient Grissil, ll. 288-93.

[30] Appius and Virginia, Dodsley, IV, p. 12.

[31] Edward the First, ll. 16-45.

[32] The First Part of the Reign of Richard II, ed. W. P. Frijlinck, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1929), ll. 104-8.

[33] Ibid., ll. 33-4.

[34] A Knack to Know a Knave, Dodsley, VI, p. 506.

[35] Caesar and Pompey, in Three Centuries of Drama, I; I, i.

[36] W. Alexander, Croesus, in Three Centuries of Drama, I; I, i.

[37] The Variorum Richard III, ed. H. J. Furness, Jr. (Philadelphia, 1908), p. 508.

[38] "The Histories of Lot and Abraham," Pageant IV in The Chester Plays, ed. T. Wright (London, 1843).

[39] Lusty Juventus, Dodsley, II, pp. 45-6.

[40] "The Dramatic Tradition Established by the Liturgical Plays," P M L A LVI (1941), pp. 962-991. The passage quoted is on p. 969.

[41] Calisto and Melebea, Dodsley, I, pp. 53-4.

[42] Supposes, in Five Pre-Shakespearean Comedies, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1950). In his introduction (xvii) Boas dates the play at 1566.

[43] The Weakest Goeth to the Wall, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1912), ll. 700-703.

[44] Wily Beguiled, Dodsley, IX, p. 232.

Chapter IV

DEVICES USED IN HERO-CHARACTERIZATION

(1) Hero Build-up in a Prologue.

Hero build-up is often effectively done by a pre-speaker, or prologue. I hesitate to capitalize the word "prologue," for there are only a comparative handful of plays in which the pre-speaker is as clearly designated "Prologue" as he is in The Jew of Malta or Troilus and Cressida. Though the pre-speaker, who is present in English drama from the folk-plays, is often called a Prologue only by editors, and though his function may be that of giving the exposition or even of blessing the audience, one finds that hero build-up is occasionally uttered by him. He addresses the audience directly in most cases, and he addresses them first, and often he is additionally authoritative because he has one of the advantages outlined in the last chapter. That is, he is sometimes a prophet, or a doctor, or even the poet himself.

The prologue of the Coventry "Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors" is spoken by Isaiah, whose prophecy is a build-up for the Christ-child, the hero. In the Ludus Coventriae's "Mary in the Temple" the figure Contemplatio is expositor and also the one who builds up Mary:

> And of here grett grace now xal ye here
> How she levyd evyr to Goddys entent.[1]

The twenty-ninth of the Ludus Coventriae -- the play which resumes

the cycle after a year's break -- has a lengthy prologue spoken by doctors. These speakers, in addition to getting the audience into a suitable frame of mind, refresh the audiences' memories about the hero, Christ.[2]

Aside from the three pageants just cited there is no other use of a pre-speaker, uninvolved in the action, for the purpose of hero build-up. Pre-speakers appear in the Ludus Coventriae "Barrenness of Anna," the Digby "Killing of the Children," and the Chester "Lot and Abraham," but the potentialities of these figures as vehicles for hero build-up are not exploited.

However, in the morality Pride of Life the Prolocutor is used to build up the hero, and he characterizes the King of Life as proud, lordly, boastful, and unafraid of death.[3] John Bale appears to have been his own Prolocutor in his The Temptation (pr. 1538). Bale's main concern was that the audience should fully understand the dramatized lesson, and so the Praefatio is an explanation of doctrine more than anything else, but there may be said to be some hero build-up in the opening lines:

> After hys baptysme, Christ was God's sonne declared
> By the father's voice ... .[4]

In Nice Wanton[5] (pr. 1560), the hero and good son Barnabas is characterized by a messenger-prologue, and this technique is repeated, though less distinctly, in Lusty Juventus[6] (pr. 1565), where the messenger-prologue's speech on the theme, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," helps to prepare for the entrance of a rather

wild boy. "The wanton boy" is the description of the hero given by the "Prologue Speaker" in The Disobedient Child[7] (pr. 1569). Godly Susanna, in the play of that name, is built up by the prologue when he speaks of her patience, virtue, and chastity, though the build-up of this heroine does not end with the prologue's speech. When Virginius, father of the heroine of Appius and Virginia, praises his daughter he is confirming what the prologue of this play has already said.

The Conflict of Conscience (pr. 1581), by Nathaniel Woodes, has an interesting prologue, which introduces the theme, reveals the true identity of "Philologus," the hero, and explains that the use of a fictitious name is a device to universalize the story of Francis Spera's downfall. This revelation of Philologus' real identity is really a revelation of the hero's character, The prologue is, in a sense, asking the audience to remember what it knows of the famous Spera:

> Speraes History [is] to most men fully knowen.[8]

It is a Presenter who, at the start of The Battle of Alcazar (pr. 1594), characterizes Muly Mohamet:

> This tyrant king,
> Of whom we treate sprang from the Arabian moore
> Blacke in his looke, and bloodie in his deeds.[9]

The Prologue to The Tragical Reign of Selimus (pr. 1594) characterizes the hero as a wicked son who pursues his father with remorseless spite, and adds:

> You shall behold him character in bloud,
> The image of an implacable King.[10]

In The Pedlar's Prophecy, a 1594 play, the Prologue ends his speech by telling the audience all that it needs to know about the hero. The pedlar is "a great medler."[11] A speech by Venus is supposed to be a part of Act One of Alphonsus, King of Aragon, but it is really a prologue introducing the action and extolling the hero.[12]

One of the most striking instances of the use of a formal prologue for the purpose of hero build-up occurs in The Life of Sir John Oldcastle (pr. 1600). The hero is under the shadow of Shakespeare's Falstaff, and the play is something of a rehabilitation of the character of Oldcastle. Shakespeare points out at the end of Henry IV, Part Two that Falstaff is not meant to be a portrait of Oldcastle, but the connection appears to have persisted, for the prologue to Oldcastle attempts to remove preconceived ideas from the heads of the audience:

> It is no pamper'd glutton we present,
> Nor aged Councellor to youthful sinne,
> But one, whose vertue shone above the rest,
> A valiant martyr, and a vertuous peere,
> In whose true faith and loyaltie exprest
> Unto his soveraigne, and his countries weale:
> We strive to pay that tribute of our Love,
> Your favours merite, let faire Truth be grac'te,
> Since forg'de invention former time defac'te.[13]

In Barnes's The Divil's Charter (pr. 1607), it is a ghost-Prologue who characterizes the hero, Pope Alexander VI, and another play printed in the same year, William Alexander's Tragedy of Julius Caesar, has hero build-up for Caesar in a prologue spoken by Juno.

To this point, I have been tracing the use of the prologue-

speaker for hero build-up in the works of minor and anonymous dramatists. Some use of the technique can be seen in the works of major Elizabethan playwrights. Marlowe showed an early liking for prologues in which his heroes were quickly and straightforwardly characterized, leaving the author free to get on with the action. The prologue to the first act of Tamburlaine the Great is very brief, and contains more exposition than characterization, but the audience is still prepared for a daring and mighty hero. In effect, the audience is told in the prologue that they are going to see an authentic representation of a legendary figure. Marlowe appears to aim at a classical effect in Doctor Faustus, where the pre-speaker is a "Chorus" who introduces the action and the hero. The function of this Chorus is the same as that of the speaker of the "Prologue at Court" written for The Jew of Malta. The Jew of Malta's Prologue simply says:

> We pursue
> The story of a rich and famous Jew
> Who lived in Malta: You shall find him still,
> In all his projects, a sound Machiavell;
> And that's his character.

For those who know what a Machiavel is, the characterization of the hero is complete. For those who do not know, Machiavelli himself has a pre-play speech, explaining the term and asking the audience to grace the hero as he deserves:

> And let him not be entertained the worse
> Because he favours me.
>
> (ll. 34-5)

Marlowe did not return to this easy method of hero build-up. In Edward II and The Massacre at Paris other techniques are used.

In George Chapman's The Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron, a formal prologue traces the hero's rise to be his country's darling, pointing out that Byron, though admirable, is morally unstable -- "great, not good." John Marston uses a prologue to build up the heroine of Wonder of Women or The Tragedy of Sophonisba as "the far-famed daughter of great Asdrubel."

At the beginning of Dekker's The Whore of Babylon, a "Lector" introduces the author, who is to speak the prologue. During this opening discourse a certain amount of hero build-up is mingled with a patriotic speech as the Lector points out that the heroine of the play is "Titania the Faerie Queene; under whom is figured our late Queene Elizabeth," and that "the generall scope of this Dramaticall Poem is to set forth ... the Greatness, Magnanimity, Constancy, Clemency, and other the incomparable Heroical vertues [of] our late Queene."[14] This is hero build-up of a most un-dramatic kind, and belongs to the play-bill rather than to the stage itself. Dekker has no reason to be fulsome in the prologue to The Witch of Edmonton, and the characterization of the heroine in this prologue is as curt as that given Marlowe's Jew of Malta: the heroine's acts are said to "deserve the name of Witch." Ben Jonson, the most consistent prologue-writer among the Elizabethan dramatists, does not mention or try to characterize any of his heroes in a prologue.

Shakespeare uses formal prologues in Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, Troilus and Cressida, and Henry VIII. In the prologue to Romeo and Juliet (a prologue which, like those of Henry V, is spoken by a

"Chorus") the hero and heroine are referred to as "star-crossed lovers." Shakespeare seems to have believed that the function of a Chorus is superior to that of a Prologue. A Prologue was often an apologist, expressing either false modesty or genuine doubts about a play and asking for the audience's forbearance. A Chorus may have been more fashionably "classical." Before the first act of Henry V, a speaker asks the audience to

> Admit me Chorus to this history,
> Who prologue-like your humble patience pray
> Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.
> (ll. 32-4)

In his "apology" he supplies a good deal of hero build-up for Henry. If only this play were adequate, he says,

> Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
> Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
> Crouch for employment.
> (ll. 5-8)

The audience knows too much about the hero already.

Kyd's The Spanish Tragedie begins with an Induction, but F.S. Boas asserts that the Spanish Lord General's long account of the battle (ll. 92-178) is really a prologue.[15] There is no build-up in this "prologue" for Hieronimo, who stands quietly while his son is praised. Boas' assertion, however, is an indication that the prologue is apt to be placed almost anywhere in the first act of a play by any of the major dramatists. J.M. Nosworthy, writing of the "bleeding sergeant" scene in Macbeth, makes much the same point about this play that Boas made in connection with The Spanish Tragedie:

> [The bleeding sergeant scene's] scope is that of a prologue, and one feels that Shakespeare would have cast it in that conventional form had he not realized the dramatic superiority of starting the play off on the "blasted heath."[16]

There is a good deal of build-up for Macbeth in this "prologue." I believe that in at least one other play Shakespeare has incorporated the prologue into the action and used that prologue as a vehicle for hero build-up. The play is Antony and Cleopatra, the prologue-speaker is Philo. Philo tells the silent Demetrius about Antony's dotage, and refers to Antony's former greatness; he introduces the action and the leading characters in the words used by countless other, more recognizable, prologue-speakers, "You shall see ... ." He is outside the picture, and he fades away, never to re-appear in the play, after speaking these lines (I, i, 1-13). Of course, this is an ironic prologue; Philo is angry, and the build-up which he gives the hero and heroine has to be evaluated by the audience. Being biassed, he is less than fair to Cleopatra, but he tells the audience, as well as Demetrius, what Antony was, as well as what Antony has become.

If the Spanish Lord General's speech is a dramatized prologue, then so are the speeches of Gloucester (Richard III, I, i, 1-41), Orlando (A Y L I, I, i, 1-26), and Prospero (The Tempest, I, ii, 1-184). And if these speeches can be called prologues, then hero build-up is being done by prologue-speakers who are the heroes themselves. Perhaps a warning to stop searching for "integrated" prologues is sounded when one comes upon Francis Fergusson's argument that the

first two scenes of Hamlet are really a prologue:

> The prologue [of Hamlet] contains two rituals, the changing of the guard and Claudius' first court.[17]

In conclusion, though prologues or introductory speeches of some kind are common throughout the English drama of the period discussed in this study, there are not too many instances of the prologue's being used to convey hero build-up. When it is so used, it is often supplemented by the use of other techniques for hero build-up, though a few plays, notably Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta, give all necessary hero-characterization in the prologue. It has been seen that the prologue may be used for hero build-up whenever the dramatist is anxious to rise to an occasion and glorify his hero by every available means, as in Henry V, or whenever the dramatist needs to correct an existing impression about the character of the hero, as in The Life of Sir John Oldcastle.

(2) Hero Build-up in an Induction.

Two plays by John Marston come under the heading of "Hero Build-up in an Induction." In The Malcontent (pr. 1604) there is an Induction in which the players appear in their own persons. It is shown that Richard Burbadge is to play the Malcontent. The fact that the star actor is to play the hero may be a roundabout indication of the hero's importance. However, in Antonio and Mellida Marston again uses an Induction, this time, I believe, with the effect of lessening the stature of the hero. The players enter

"with parts in their hands; having cloaks over their apparel." The actor who is to play Antonio complains that he has to disguise himself as a woman for part of the play:

> Feliche. ... What must thou play?
> Antonio. Faith, I know not what; an hermaphrodite, two parts in one; my true person being Antonio, son to the Duke of Genoa; though for the love of Mellida, Piero's daughter, I take this feigned presence of an Amazon, calling myself Florizell, and I know not what. I a voice to play a lady! I shall ne'er do it.
> Alberto. O! an Amazon should have such a voice, virago like. Not play two parts in one? Away, away, 'tis common fashion. Nay, if you cannot bear two subtle fronts under one hood, idiot, go by ... .
>
> (Induction, ll. 71-82)

This Induction is an advertisement of the players' versatility as well as an introduction to the plot and characters, but it is strange preparation to have the actor who is to play the hero of a serious drama called an idiot in front of the audience.

(3) Characterization of the Hero as a Type.

Character-types abound in the English drama during the period covered in this study. Some heroes are characterized as types, quickly drawn by the dramatist and readily recognized by the audience.

The braggart-type came early into English drama. He is exemplified by the Herods of the mysteries. The braggart who is quickly exposed is not often a hero, but examples of the use of the type are Thersites,[18] Johan Johan, and Raph, the hero of The Cobler's Prophecy.

The virtuous woman is something of a type in those plays of

the period of transition from religious to professional drama. Godly Susanna, Virginia in Appius and Virgina, Melebea in Calisto and Melebea, and Philip's Patient Grissil are all really types of the virtuous woman. Each could appear as heroine in any of the others' plays.

When Melebea characterizes Calisto as a worthy fellow, but a doting lover, and when Sempronio the Parasite later says of Calisto, "I will not mock; this fool is a lover," the audience of Calisto and Melebea (pr. 1530) is apparently supposed to have some idea of what a moon-struck lover is like. Calisto demonstrates most of the symptoms, quibbling and sighing in a manner that prefigures the behaviour of Romeo, Troilus, and Orsino, and the type may be said to be, as far as the drama is concerned, established in this play. I cannot find an earlier instance. The lover-hero is one who is, at his most distinctive, rather foolish, moody, "sighing every minute and groaning every hour,"[19] though, as mentioned above, Shakespeare does not make the character of Romeo as a lover depend upon the audience's knowledge of psychology or types. In Shakespeare, the lover's silliness, or at least the lover-hero's silliness, is usually shown to be a temporary condition, so that the appearance of a young man, groaning and quibbling, is almost a guarantee that he will shortly come to himself and show a good deal of spirit.

It might appear that one kind of hero, or hero-villain, was well enough known to be included in this study as a hero-type. This is the Machiavel. Theodore Spencer says that Machiavelli

> was universally described as an atheist and an unscrupulous fiend; he was referred to no fewer than 395 times in Elizabethan drama as the embodiment of human villainy.[20]

But the only play in which I find the concept of the Machiavel used as hero build-up is The Jew of Malta. Shakespeare uses the term three times, and then not in connection with a hero. The Duke of Gloucester may describe himself as a Machiavel, but he does not use the term in his self-characterizing soliloquy in Richard III. This hero has something of the tyrant in his make-up, and the tyrant is a type which goes back to the Herod of the mysteries.

After the popular success of The Spanish Tragedie, the Revenger became a hero-type on the English stage. A playwright had only to indicate, by the exhibition of a body, the appearance of a ghost crying "Revenge," or even by showing a murder, that the hero had been wronged. The audience then could tell, from any or all of these incidents, that the hero was a man who, though usually virtuous, lusted for blood in a "righteous" cause. They knew that he would be hesitant, might be fair enough to want absolute proof of the villain's guilt, would feign madness or actually become mad, and that he would contemplate suicide. The most famous examples of the type after Hieronimo, in whom it is defined, are Antonio, in Marston's Antonio's Revenge, young Hoffman, in Chettle's Tragedy of Hoffman,[21] Hamlet, and Vindice in Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy (1607). Hoffman is an example of complete characterization through the use of the audience's knowledge of the revenger-hero.

(4) Characterization of the Hero through his Appearance and Costume.

Shakespeare came to realize that appearances often do not count for very much, and makes Duncan say, in Macbeth,

> There's no art
> To find the mind's construction in the face.
> (I, iv, 11-12)

But still, the hero of a play ought to look like a hero, and from the folk-plays onward a certain amount of hero build-up is achieved through the visual impression made by the hero when he appears. This effect is directed at the whole audience. "I've a crown on my pate," says King Alfred in the folk-play. He looks like a king, or like the playwright's and audience's conception of a king. In King Lear, written near the end of the period under study, the hero is meant to look "every inch a king." It does not seem likely that the people who produced the folk-plays would have a diminutive St. George or King Alfred, for there is fighting to be done against "terrible" enemies.

There are numerous records of how the performers in the religious plays were costumed, but none mentioning that actors with commanding physiques were to play Christ. One would be ready to assume that Christ is a commanding figure, but internal evidence in one mystery play allows more than an assumption. The author of the Towneley "The Buffeting" appears to call for a tall Christ in the following passage:

> Primus tortor. We shall teche hym, I wote / a new play of yoyll,
> And hold hym full hote / frawrord, a stoyll
> Go fetch us!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> ffroward. why must he sytt soft / with a mekill myschaunce,

	That has tenyd us thus oft? /
primus tortor.	sir, we do it for a skawnce;
	If he stode up on loft / we must hop and dawnse
	As cokys in a croft.
	(ll. 344-55)

Though the author might be making the point that the tormentors feel safer with their victim bound in a chair, it could also be inferred that the hero of this play -- and perhaps of the cycles as a whole -- was to have heroic physical stature. In nearly every one of the Passion sequences the executioners make a great show of stretching Christ so that he will reach the prepared nail-holes on the Cross. A short Christ might make this horrible business seem necessary, and the emphasis upon the needless cruelty of the executioners would be lost.

Shakespeare often plainly calls for good physical stature in his heroes. Orlando, for example, is a champion wrestler, who can sieze his brother in a vice-like grip and hold him despite his struggles while a good many lines are spoken.[22] In addition, Orlando wins Rosalind, and since the latter is "more than common tall" (I, iii, 117), a big hero is necessary. Antony is described as being able to look over the heads of his troops on parade (I, i, 2-4).

In The True Tragedie of Richard III the hero's appearance is distinctive, and is described before his entrance. But in Shakespeare's Richard III the hero's body is, on the one hand, an index of his nature and, on the other hand (as he points out), the cause of his villainy. Othello is, of course, set apart by his colour. The appearance of Bertram, in All's Well that Ends Well, is of great

importance. Shakespeare stresses in the first stage-direction that Bertram is "young." This hero does some distasteful things in the play, but his youthful appearance is probably supposed to hold out hope for an eventual change.

The hero's costume comes under the heading of characterization by appearance. Costume can help to identify and even characterize a hero, especially to a sharp-eyed audience which appears to have been trusted to recognize Shylock's Jewish gaberdine. There is of course the costume or property which makes the hero easily recognizable, such as John the Baptist's clothing of animal skins, the cobbler's tools which, according to a stage direction, Raph the Cobler carries on his first appearance in The Cobler's Prophecy,[23] the heavy pack of the hero of The Pedler's Prophecy,[24] or the symbols of kingship and government which appear in many plays. Esau, in Jacob and Esau, comes on in hunting dress, after he has been characterized as a fanatical hunter and has been heard blowing his horn off-stage.[25] Some mention of the use of distinctive dress for the purpose of identification has already been made in the chapter on audience knowledge, and the following information from Allardyce Nicoll's The Development of the Theatre may be added:

> We certainly know that ... Nobody in the play of Nobody and Somebody was represented with breeches up to his neck so that 'no body' should be visible, and we are aware that other conventional costuming was indulged in. Thus in Henry IV the King is shown to us in his bedchamber, lying there in his night-gown with, rather uncomfortably, his crown on his head.[26]

The hero's costume can, however, help to characterize its wearer.

Infans, in Mundus et Infans, is characterized at first as poor and completely helpless. His self-characterization consists of drawing attention to his costume, or lack of it:

> Poore and naked as ye may se;
> I am not worthely wrapped nor went,
> But powerly prycked in pouerte.[27]

In this play, in fact, changes in the hero's character are indicated by changes of clothing.

The hero of the Digby play, The Conversion of St. Paul, is at first characterized as very worldly, and so he enters "goodly besene in the best wyse lyke an aunterous knyth."[28] Thersites, the braggart hero of Thersites, rushes on to the stage with a great bluster, boasting of his prowess and offering to fight all comers. But he is armed with a club, the least "heroic" of weapons, and this property helps to stamp him as what he really is, a low bully. The hero of Magnyfycence is meant to look magnificent. The audience, I believe, is to be made to stare, and the hero's haughty self-announcement is almost a rebuke to the gapers:

> To assure you of my noble port and fame
> Who list to know, Magnyfycence I hight.

Treasure, heroine of The Trial of Treasure, looks her part. A stage-direction reads, "Enter ... Treasure, a woman finely appareled."[29] In Tancred and Gismunda (1568, altered 1591) Gismunda's importance is indicated by the fact that she comes on stage in purple.[30] On the other hand, the author of Patient Grissil, John Phillip, is aiming for the effect of sobriety and industry, and calls for some sort of

portable apparatus with which Grissil may make her first entrance, "Syngyng and Spinning: wyth her Parents, and Indigent Pouertie."[31]

Tamburlaine's shepherd-dress, worn at his first entrance, makes a good contrast with the luxurious costumes of Mycetes' court in the previous scene, and the hero's discarding of the shepherd's weeds for armour is effective. The armour sorts well with his fierceness:

> Lie here, ye weeds, that I disdain to wear!
> This complete armour and this curtle-axe
> Are adjuncts more beseeming Tamburlaine.
> (I, ii, 41-3)

The transformation wrought by the change of dress is emphasized by Techelles' exclamation of admiration (I, ii, 52-4). Costumes and setting in the opening scene of Shakespeare's Richard II are meant to be gorgeous, to suggest the hero's love of high living. Richard admits that,

> Our coffers, with too great a court
> And liberal largess, are grown somewhat light.
> (I, iv, 43-4)

Titus Andronicus is "bound with laurel boughs" (I, i, 74) when he first appears, and Macbeth, fresh from the battle, is presumably still "lapped in proof" when he enters to the sound of a drum. The fact that Hamlet wears black clothing while those around him are in festive dress is a guide to his character, and I shall discuss this contrast below. Prospero has a "magic garment," which he wears at his first entrance and which is put on and off with ceremony. This costume of Prospero's adds to the aura of power and mystery which surrounds him.

That Shakespeare knew the value of appearance and costuming

is evident from the examples just cited from his plays. But, as he often does, Shakespeare goes farther than any other dramatist of the period in this matter of characterization through the use of costume. Julius Caesar begins with the entrance of "Flavius, Marullus, and certain Commoners." Attention is at once drawn to the fact that the commoners are dressed in a certain way:

> Flavius. Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home!
> Is this a holiday? What! know you not.
> Being mechanical, you ought not walk
> Upon a labouring day without the sign
> Of your profession. Speak, what trade art thou?
> Car. Why, sir, a carpenter.
> Mar. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
> What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
> (I, i, 1-8)

The Elizabethans were used to seeing people wear the distinctive badge of their occupations, on the stage as well as in everyday life. It has already been mentioned that the hero of The Cobler's Prophecy carries his tools, and the hero of The Pedlar's Prophecy his pack. Lacy, in Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday, poses as a cobbler and in this character bears "St. Hugh's bones" (I, iv, 42-3). Therefore, an audience for a performance of Julius Caesar would feel the extraordinariness of a situation in which working men discard their labouring dress and appear in their Sunday-best on a work-day. The reason for the "strange" costume is quickly revealed. Caesar is coming home, and the holiday clothes are worn in tribute to the hero's great reputation. The dramatist has managed to use for the purpose of hero build-up, not simply the costumes that a group of minor characters are wearing, but also the costumes that they are not

wearing. It might be asked, who would think of characterizing Julius Caesar with the use of a carpenter's best suit?

(5) Hero Build-up through the use of Names.

In many of the early English plays, folk and religious, the hero's name is the greatest thing about him. The folk-playwrights are really unable to give adequate representations of, say, St. George or King Alfred, but the great names cover a good many shortcomings in presentation. When the central figure of the mystery plays names himself, or is named, it might almost be said that all necessary hero build-up has been accomplished. The name of Christ would touch springs of devotion and admiration in the audience that no secular hero could hope to touch. To a somewhat lesser extent, the same thing may be said about the saints who are heroes of miracle plays.

But the secular dramatists were not entirely denied advantages of this kind. They had, in many cases, at least the same advantage as the folk-dramatists. Some heroes and heroines of the secular drama have names of almost legendary significance. Patient Grissil's name, for example, appears to have been synonymous with virtue and long-suffering, and she is the heroine of at least two plays in the period under study. Robin Hood is a hero who had only to be named to be characterized, and the author of The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon[32] seems to have recognized this fact, for no other hero build-up is given to Robin after he is named. The heroine of Daniel's Cleopatra (pr. 1594) and the hero of William Alexander's

Julius Caesar (pr. 1607) are almost wholly characterized by the simple process of dropping their names, and Shakespeare and Marlowe are trying to embody great names in Henry V, Henry VIII, and Tamburlaine. Shakespeare also appears to leave undisturbed the images conjured up in the minds of his audience by the names of Henry IV, Richard ll, and Richard III. But though he helped to swell the audience by naming a play Julius Caesar, the hero of this play is not exactly the man that the name implies he is.

Another way to characterize the hero through his name is, of course, to give him a name which plainly indicates his character -- a name like Everyman, Mundus, King of Life, or Mankind. Sometimes the playwright may have to have a character explain what his name means, as Joachim does in the Ludus Coventriae's "Barrenness of Anna:"

> Joachim is to say, he that to God is redy,
> So have I be and evyr more xal.

Most heroes with descriptive names are, naturally, found in morality plays, but a number of heroes of the later drama have descriptive names. I confine myself to listing only the most obvious of these names. Magnyfycence, Hickscorner, Lusty Juventus, and Ralph Roister Doister are names which clearly suggest the natures of the heroes who bear them. The name of the hero of Nice Wanton, Barnabas, is not so obviously a characterizing one, but this hero's chief quality is that he is a good son, and the Prologue points out that "Barnabas [is] by interpretation the son of comfort."[33] The hero of Wily

Beguiled is a scholar, aptly named Sophos. Dekker's Honest Whore is named Bellafront. Ben Jonson is of course fond of labelling his heroes with descriptive names like Volpone and Subtle, a technique which is suited to the drama of humours.

John Ruskin has expended great -- perhaps too-great -- ingenuity on his examination of the descriptiveness of the names of some of Shakespeare's characters. Ruskin points out that Miranda means "the wonderful," and that she is first addressed by Ferdinand as "you wonder." Valentine, Ruskin goes on, means "strong" or "enduring," while Proteus means "changeful." He makes other conjectures, mainly from the Greek roots of the names of some of Shakespeare's heroes, but it must always be asked, how many people in Shakespeare's audience would have been able to interpret Othello's nature from the fact that this hero's name (Ruskin says) is derived from a Greek word meaning "the careful"?[34]

The Elizabethan practice, I believe, is to make the characterizing name quite obvious, and usually to apply it to a minor character. Good examples of both tendencies are the aptly-named Lazarotto in The First Part of Jeronimo, and Shakespeare's Borachio and Pistol.

(6) Hero Build-up through the Use of Contrast.

Perhaps the best use of visual contrast in English drama is made in the mystery plays, in which the authors appear to have tried hard to suggest the gorgeousness of the courts of Hero and Pilate,

and to contrast this gorgeousness with Christ's earthly simplicity. An observation partly quoted in another context is worth quoting again in this connection:

> Herod, a periwig-pated fellow ['arrates visar'] strutting his hour or two in robes borrowed from the Church itself and followed by a page ['him that caried arates clothes'] who held up the train of his sumptuous garments, must have presented a blatant contrast to the stripped, whipped, and bedrabbled Son of Man.[35]

The point impressed upon the audience, as part of the larger truth which the Church wished to enforce, is that fine feathers do not make fine birds, nor rich robes a great hero. The contrast just described would make the audience think, if it had not already done so, about the real reasons for Christ's heroic stature.

Part of the characterization of both the leading figures in Mundus et Infans is enforced by means of the same type of contrast. Mundus is supposed to be a great, rich, and proud monarch, and his richness and pride are emphasized by the appearance of the naked and humble Infans; the latter's initial lowliness is also emphasized. Tamburlaine's barbarousness is accentuated when he enters in his shepherd's dress directly after the audience has seen the spectacle of the luxurious and effete court of Mycetes. The contrast between simple honesty and sophisticated dishonesty is perhaps meant to be made in the dress of Orlando and Oliver when they are first seen together in As You Like It.

Henry IV, Part One is a play in which Shakespeare makes good use of contrast for the purpose of hero build-up. Hotspur gets the

best of it. The King contrasts Hotspur with Prince Henry, to Hotspur's advantage. A striking use of contrast is made in Hotspur's speech recounting what took place after the battle of Holmeden (I, iii, 29-69). In this speech, Hotspur conjures up a vivid picture of the "certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd, Fresh as a bridegroom, ... perfumed like a milliner," who "[shone] so brisk and [smelled] so sweet And [talked] so like a waiting-gentlewoman." The contrast between this lord and Hotspur himself," dry with rage and extreme toil, Breathless and faint, leaning on [his] sword," accentuates Hotspur's manliness and valour, and does so all the more effectively because it is not his intention to praise himself. Another dramatist might have made this contrast a purely visual one. It is noticeable that when the time comes for Hal to move Hotspur aside Shakespeare gives an even more striking picture of "young Harry with his beaver on" (IV, i, 104-10).

Something of the same technique is used in Antony and Cleopatra. Philo paints a picture of Antony in his true milieu, at the head of "the files and musters of the war," and invites a contrast between this picture and the one which Demetrius (and the audience) now sees, of Antony surrounded by eunuchs and women (I, i, 1-13).

Another contrast, of a different sort but still with some effect in hero-characterization, is to be found in the first two scenes of The Tempest. The first scene of this play is full of the violence of nature. The second is calm and idyllic, and the audience learns at once that Prospero can control the elements (I, ii, 1-6) -- information about the hero that is made more impressive for our

having seen a demonstration of his power.

But the best-known contrast in Shakespeare's works is that between the gaily-dressed, festive court of Claudius and the black-clad, silent figure of Hamlet. The hero is meant to stand out sharply against his background, and the contrast is to quicken the audience's interest in him. To arouse or intensify audience interest in the hero is the object of hero build-up, and the vivid contrast just described accomplishes this object. When the audience's attention is caught by this device, the invitation comes to look further:

> I have that within which passeth show --
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
> (I, ii, 85-6)

(7) Characterization of the Hero through his Speech.

Characterization of the hero through his speech can also involve the use of contrast, a contrast between the hero's language, and even the verse-forms in which he speaks, and the language of lesser persons. Audiences composed of people who learned mostly by ear may be expected to have had some sensitivity to changes in speech or verse between speakers.

In the mystery plays, Christ speaks what is "authorized" by the Bible and speaks it with fitting gravity and seriousness. Herod's speeches are "daring, pompous, and blustering."[36] There is a striking difference between the silence or the dignified utterances of Christ and the almost ceaseless rant of His enemies. The contrast is favourable to the hero. Different rhyme schemes are even given to

different characters, or groups of characters, in the mysteries, as Lucy Toulmin Smith notes:

> Attention may be drawn ... to the manner in which the varied metre is adapted to the style of subject to be treated or to the personage speaking; for example, Deus and Jesus invariably speak in grave, dignified verse, while the long, pompous, mouth-filling lines, excessive in the alliterative stress, are put into the mouths of ... Herod, Pilate, and Caiaphas ... .[37]

In Wisdom, as R. L. Ramsay points out, an eight line stanza ababbcbc is generally used throughout the serious parts of the play when Wisdom, the hero, is on stage, while tail-rhyme is used exclusively for the vice scenes.[38] An onlooker with a good ear would notice that the hero's sobriety and seriousness are suggested through his speech. John Skelton is expert at using verse-forms, and in Magnyfycence he gives special dignity to the hero by writing his lines in rhyme-royal, though Measure, Liberty, and Felicity, fit companions for a prince, also speak in rhyme-royal.

Fulgens, in Fulgens and Lucres, uses rhyme-royal at his first entrance, though the effectiveness of this dignified verse-form in helping to characterize a dignified hero is lessened by the fact that "B" has already used the same verse in relating the plot of the play.[39]

The author of Appius and Virginia tries to make his heroine, who is supposed to be a simple girl, speak more simply than the older people in the play. Virginia's parents have fourteen-syllable couplets which are dignified, if monotonous. The heroine speaks in "fourteeners," alternating lines of eight and six syllables. The difference between the speech of the simple girl and that of the more

sophisticated people may, however, be more marked in print than in the actual performance.

George Peele's Edward the First is a play of great pageantry. Edward appears to be meant to speak like a king, and in the opening scene, in which the dramatist pitches the speech of everyone very high, Edward's first few lines are the most balanced, most rhetorical of all:

> Deare was my uncle, dearer was my sonne:
> And ten times dearer was my noble father,
> Yet were their lives valewd at thousand worlds,
> They cannot scape the arrest of dreadfull death.
> (ll. 75-8)

These words are small comfort for the mother whom Edward is supposed to be soothing, but they probably represent the dramatist's idea of how great men speak on great occasions. The hero of Orlando Furioso is definitely set apart from the other contestants in a trial for the hand of Angelica. The other suitors boast, but Orlando marshals his arguments with gravity, and begins with the dignity and decorum befitting to the hero:

> Lords of the South, & Princes of esteeme,
> Viceroys unto the State of Affrica:
> I am no King, yet am I princely borne ... .
> (l. 99f.)

In this contest, the best address signifies the best man.

But while the difference between the language of the heroes and that of the vices is often clear in the old plays, heroes have no monopoly upon smooth speech in the professional drama. In Shakespeare's plays, however, there are one or two instances in which the hero's method of speech gives some insight into his character and sets

him apart from others in the play. Othello is meant to be markedly different from the Venetians and, as if the colour of his skin were not a sufficient reminder, his first long speech is sprinkled with strange words and references to

> antres vast and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven.
> (I, iii, 140-1)

He talks of cannibals, "Anthropophagi, and men whose heads Do grow beneath their shoulders," and shows himself, in short, to be an alien in the super-subtle world of Venice.[40] B. Ifor Evans says:

> Othello's own early speeches explore his proud, manly, and simple character. He is direct in speech, without any of the subtleties of the 'curled darlings' of Venice ... . His references to the Cannibals and 'The Anthropophagi ...' give a touch of the primitive to his transparent and guileless nature, with a background of the superstitious.[41]

I find no contrast between the speech of Othello and that of the "curled darlings," since I am unable to determine just to whom in the play this epithet might be applied. There is, however, a contrast between the way in which Iago speaks to other people in the first act and the way in which he addresses Othello, and this contrast is perhaps a comment upon Othello's authority. Iago is foul-mouthed with Roderigo and insinuatingly lewd with Cassio, his superior (I, ii, 50-3), but toward Othello he is deferential.

In the opening scene of Hamlet a good deal of emphasis is placed upon speech. Horatio has been invited to keep watch so that he, a scholar, may speak to the Ghost (I, i, 29). But though he addresses the Ghost with a formal exhortation (I, i, 127-39), he

gets no reply. Horatio then says:

> Let us impart what we have seen tonight
> Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life,
> This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
> (I, i, 169-71)

And so the audience is prepared for a hero whose speech is even more winning than that of the eloquent Horatio. Yet in the next scene it is not Hamlet who is found speaking winningly, but Claudius. The court appears to be charmed by Claudius' rhetoric, but while that rhetoric is washing smoothly over the assembly, the hero sits in silence. When he does speak, he does so truculently, "A little more than kin and less than kind," and insinuatingly, "Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun." There is a danger that the contrast between the hero's silence and Claudius' rhetorical smoothness might lose sympathy for Hamlet, but close attention to Claudius' opening lines would warn the audience to distrust this glib speaker. He begins by admitting incest, and no matter how the pill is coated with the sugar of rhetoric, the admission is meant to be a damning one. Honied speech is associated with villainy, and Hamlet's short ejaculations savour less of sullenness than of what Shakespeare calls, in another play,[42] "russet yeas and honest kersey noes."

Before leaving this discussion of the characterization of the hero by his manner of speaking, one or two other points may be made. In Much Ado About Nothing a contrast between effusiveness and speechlessness is used to mark the difference between the two heroes, Benedick the eloquent and Claudio the laconic. B. Ifor Evans misses

Shakespeare's intention when he says that "Claudio is one of the most unsatisfactory heroes in the comedies, and his language has in it nothing remarkable."[43] Alwin Thaler knew better:

> No one can help recalling the nice balance of effect as between the irrepressible Beatrice and her demure cousin, the gentle Hero; or Benedick's excellent stomach for words and Claudio's adolescent speechlessness while Don Pedro goes a-wooing for him.[44]

Thaler also points out that, in Twelfth Night, "the charming reserve of Viola ... is set off against the outspokenness of Olivia and the sentimental effusiveness of Orsino."[45]

One Shakespearean hero is partly characterized as a "chip off the old block" by his silence after his first entrance. This hero is Henry V, whose father, in Richard II, is called "silent king" by the man he has just deposed. F. M. Salter has noticed that Shakespeare gives this trait to Bolingbroke's son:

> Henry V has a trick of his father Bolingbroke. The first scene in which he appears (I, ii) shows him silent and attentive while Canterbury, Ely, Exeter, and Westmoreland urge him to make war in France and expound his right to the French Throne. Of 188 lines (ll. 32-220), he speaks 17.[46]

(8) Hero Build-up through the Use of Allusion.

Hero build-up may be accomplished in part by means of an allusion which hints to the audience that the hero's character or situation is like that of someone more famous or revered. Naturally, such a technique would be confined to the secular drama. I do not have in mind here the extravagant direct comparisons with

which the Elizabethan drama abounds, but rather the allusive characterization that might come about in a climate such as that described by M. C. Bradbrook:

> The [Elizabethan] audiences were trained by their whole dramatic tradition to feel an allegorical significance behind a formal or rhythmic grouping. The influence of the masque and of shows helped to support it; and such passages as those between the Painter and Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy are sufficient reminder that the paintings of the period were often allegorical too.[47]

Miss Bradbrook is here chiefly interested in formal groupings, the effect of which as an aid in hero build-up I intend to discuss in the following chapter. But there is one play in which the audience's feeling for "the allegorical significance behind a grouping" is possibly being used to inspire sympathy for the hero, as well as suggest the fate that is in store for him. This play is Othello. In I, ii, Othello, Iago, and attendants are joined by "Cassio, and certain officers with torches" (I, ii, 34 s.d.). While the hero stands in the midst of his followers, among whom is his betrayer, Brabantio's people enter, "they draw on both sides," and Iago makes a great flourish at Roderigo. For an instant the swirl of action takes on a certain pattern: Othello is standing with his followers about him, confronting the people who have come to take him prisoner. Torches flicker, swords are out, and one person on the hero's side is actively aggressive. To an audience which had seen mystery plays this tableau must have been reminiscent of the mystery enactments of the capture of Christ. The pattern holds for a moment and then Othello breaks the spell by saying, ironically:

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
(I, ii, 60)

The scene's suggestiveness is quite startling. Its implications for hero build-up are no less so. One has the feeling that, while simply observing Shakespeare's technique of building up one of his heroes, some of the profundity which exists in all great tragedy has been stumbled upon.

(9) Conclusion.

In this chapter I have attempted to show, by examples, how the hero in English drama to the death of Shakespeare is sometimes characterized, or partly characterized, in prologues and inductions, and by his appearance, his costume, his name, and even his speech. In some cases dramatists made conscious use of contrasts between the hero and his enemies for the purpose of characterization. I have cited an example, from Othello, of what I believe to be hero build-up through the use of an allusive, allegorical grouping.

Footnotes: Chapter IV

[1] Ludus Coventriae, p. 79.

[2] Ibid., pp. 288-90.

[3] Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, pp. 88-104.

[4] The Temptation, in Three Centuries of Drama, I.

[5] Dodsley, II.

[6] Dodsley, II.

[7] Dodsley, II.

[8] The Conflict of Conscience, ed. H. Davis and F. P. Wilson, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1952), l. 30.

[9] The Battle of Alcazar, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1907), ll. 17-19.

[10] The Tragical Reign of Selimus, ed. W. Bang, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1908).

[11] The Pedler's Prophecy, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1914), l. 78. The date, 1594, is the editor's (Introduction, p. v).

[12] Alphonsus, King of Aragon, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1926), I, i, 1-48.

[13] The Life of Sir John Oldcastle, ed. Percy Simpson, Malone Soc. Reprints (Chiswick Press, 1908).

[14] Dekker, The Whore of Babylon, Prologue.

[15] The Works of Thomas Kyd, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1901), p. xxxii.

[16] J. M. Nosworthy, "The Bleeding Captain Scene in Macbeth," R E S , XXII (1946), pp. 126-30.

[17] Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theatre (Princeton, 1949), p. 120.

[18] Dodsley, I, p. 395.

[19] As You Like It, III, ii, 321.

[20] Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 44.

[21] The Tragedy of Hoffman, ed. H. Jenkins, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1950). Henslowe commissioned a "tragedie called Hawghman" in 1602, but it is not known when the play was completed.

[22] Orlando seizes Oliver at I, i, 56, holds him while he (Orlando) speaks seven lines of prose, and is still holding on at I, i, 69, when he says, "I will not [let go], till I please," and goes on, presumably with Oliver still in his grasp, to claim his rights.

[23] The Cobler's Prophecy, ed. A. C. Wood, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1941), l. 51 s. d.: "Enter Raph Cobler with his stoole, his implements and shooes ... ."

[24] The Pedler's Prophecy, ll. 79-80.

[25] Dodsley, II, p. 191.

[26] Allardyce Nicoll, The Development of the Theatre (New York, 1937), p. 137.

[27] Specimens, I, p. 355.

[28] Specimens, I, p. 216.

[29] Dodsley, III, p. 288.

[30] Robert Wilmot, Tancred and Gismund, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1914), I, ii.

[31] l. 218 s. d.

[32] Dodsley, VIII. The play is mentioned by Henslowe under the date February 1597-8.

[33] Dodsley, II, p. 163.

[34] John Ruskin, Munera Pulveris, in Works, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (London, 1905), XVII, p. 223 and note, pp. 257-8.

[35] F. M. Salter, Introduction to The Trial and Flagellation, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1935), p. 27.

[36] L. T. Smith, Introduction to The York Plays, p. lvi.

[37] Ibid., p. l.

[38] R. L. Ramsay, Introduction to Skelton's Magnyfycence, p. cxxxviii.

[39] Fulgens and Lucres, ll. 70-125.

[40] The statements made here about Othello's language are also made in G. Wilson Knight's The Wheel of Fire (London, 1960), p. 106. I acknowledge their presence in that place.

[41] B. I. Evans, The Language of Shakespeare's Plays (London, 1959), p. 152.

[42] Love's Labour's Lost, V, ii, 413.

[43] Evans, op. cit., p. 108.

[44] Alwin Thaler, Shakespeare's Silences (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 24.

[45] Ibid., p. 24.

[46] F. M. Salter, "Shakespeare's Use of Silence," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Ser., XLV (1951), sec. ii, p. 73.

[47] M. C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1960), p. 28.

Chapter V

THE USE OF ENTRANCES, ACTION, AND ORDER OF SPEAKING IN HERO-CHARACTERIZATION

(1) The Use of Grand Entrances in Hero Build-up.

In the folk-plays the processional entrance adds a dash of pageantry to the proceedings, but there is no indication that it contributes anything to hero-characterization other than giving the audience a chance to see the impressive costumes. It has been mentioned above that in the mystery cycles elaborate entrances and gorgeous trappings are often meant to be a warning against worldly vanity rather than a contribution to the hero's impressiveness.

But in the secular drama, the audiences for which would be more inclined to take impressive costuming at its face value, first appearances often play an important part in helping to characterize the hero. This fact has already been stated and partly illustrated in the discussions, above, of the hero's physical appearance and costume, and of the use of visual contrasts. The way in which the hero makes his first appearance is sometimes as important for the purpose of hero build-up as what he looks like. J. W. Draper says:

> ...In true comedy and tragedy, the expression of complex personality demands every vehicle and device that art allows; and in Shakespeare, who presents more,and more complex personalities than any other dramatist, the first appearance of an exalted, or at least a very important, person often overflows his own speech and

> action, and is prefaced by some explanation of his character and place in the plot, is accented by music or the blast of trumpets or the roll of drums, and is accompanied by lords and lesser attendants in proper order of precedence ... .[1]

It will be recalled that in the discussion of what the audiences knew and liked (Chapter I) it was noted that the Elizabethan audience loved to see ceremonial entrances, and could discriminate between the importance of a person whose entrance was heralded by a sennet and one who entered to a flourish.[2] I propose to show that in the secular drama of the period under study many "grand entrances" have, as part of their purpose, the object of characterizing a hero.

The hero of Skelton's Magnyfycence is supposed to be an impressive figure as he comes on the "noble port" and haughty bearing, and here the air of ostentation which surrounds the hero's stately entrance seems to be an indication of the tenuous hold which Measure has upon him. It is not a great step from the initial appearance of Magnyfycence to the first appearance of Shakespeare's Richard II, who is quickly seen to embody the superficial gorgeousness of his court. Shakespeare is, of course, following Holinshead rather than Skelton.

The hero in the secular drama is most often a public figure, and the grand entrance shows him in relation to his followers or his peers. At the first entrance of the titular hero of Cambises (licensed 1569) the stage-direction calls for the characters to be lined up in order of importance: "First enter Cambises, the king, Knight, and Councellor."[3] Pageantry is an aid to characterization in the anonymous Richard II or Thomas of Woodstock (1591-3). When

the king and Woodstock first enter the stage-direction reads: "Sound a Senett, / Enter in great state. King Richard Queen Ann, (Crownde) lancaster ... And Woodstock very brave ... ."[4] The king, as titular hero, leads the procession with his queen; Woodstock, as chief character, stands out in the procession. In Tancred and Gismund (1591), the heroine, a princess, enters dressed in purple and attended by maids of honour. Her father, Tancred the king, is accompanied by his guards when he comes on.[5] Samuel Rowley's When You See Me (pr. 1605), the subtitle of which is The Famous Chronicle History of Henry VIII, is a forerunner of Shakespeare's Henry VIII. The opening stage-direction is: "Enter the Cardinall with the Embassadours of Fraunce, in all state and royaltie, the Purse and Mace before him."[6] The king enters at l. 134 in great state, heralded by trumpets, but the symbols of power are all Wolsey's,a fact which indicates that the hero is in Wolsey's power. The First Part of If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody (1605) is sub-titled The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth. In this play, the mace, crown, purse, and sceptre are carried before the Queen when she first appears.[7]

Thomas Dekker knows how to use a grand entrance to immediately show a character's irreligion, pride, or strangeness. The Empress of Babylon, one of the "heroines" of The Whore of Babylon (1607) enters first with "her canopie supported by four Cardinals: two persons in Pontificall robes on either hand, the one bearing a sword, the other the keies: before her three Kings crowned, behind her Friers, &c." Even among the highly-coloured pageantry of the Elizabethan stage this

uniquely Roman Catholic pageantry stands out. Like the splendour of Herod in the mystery plays it is designed to arouse antipathy toward the person exalted. On the other hand, when Titania, who represents Queen Elizabeth in this propagandizing play, comes on in I, ii, her train is largely made up of pensioners. Alphonso, King of Naples, is the hero of another Dekker play, If this be not a Good Play, The Devil is in It (pr. 1612). In this piece Dekker shows the hero's importance by having him enter in great state, "Crownde, wearing Robes Imperiall, Swordes of State, Maces, &c. borne before him ..." (I, ii, l s. d.).

In the first act of The Whore of Babylon characterization of the two main figures is aided by the contrast between excess and simplicity. The other processions referred to above may be simple appeals to the eye of the spectator, but at the least they suggest the importance of the heroes or heroines. In order that the hero's importance may be plainly shown it is probably necessary that he be more than just another member of a procession. In Chapman and Shirley's Tragedy of Chabot (c. 1612),[8] the hero, occupying a lesser position than the king in the grand entrance which takes place shortly after the start of the play, is overshadowed by the king and rivalled by his peers.[9] George Peele, on the other hand, knows what he is doing in Edward I (pr. 1593). Edward is returning with his army from Palestine. A mood of expectancy is created as the Queen Mother and nobles gather at the palace; then the stage direction reads:

> The Trumpets sound, and enter the traine, viz. his maimed Souldiers with head-peeces and Garlands on them, every man with his red Crosse on his coate: the Ancient borne in a Chaire, his Garland and his plumes on his headpeece, his Ensigne in his hand. Enter after them Gloucester and Mortimer bareheaded, & others as many as may be. Then Longshanks and his wife Elinor.[10]

Longshanks is the hero-king. Peele is trying for an air of suspense, and the procession builds up to the hero. In addition, the fact that the common soldiers are allowed to precede their king suggests that the latter is generous enough to appreciate their valour. After some alarms occasioned by the swooning of the Queen Mother, a tableau is formed:

> The Queene Mother being set on the one side, and Queene Elinor on the other, the king sitteth in the middest mounted highest, and at his feet the Ensign underneath him.[11]

This arrangement is exaltation of the hero indeed, in masque-like fashion. As a final flourish, just before Edward thanks and liberally rewards his soldiers, the playwright directs the players to "Use drummes, Trumpets, and Ensignes, and then speake Edward."[12]

In the anonymous Caesar's Revenge (pr. 1607),[13] brilliant processional entrances appear, along with the spirit-starting name of the hero, to be the only method of hero build-up employed. The name and a grand entrance to "Loud music," stress the importance of the titular hero of Charlemagne, an anonymous play composed about 1604.[14]

Even those dramatists who use more, and more subtle, methods of characterization can be found employing the procession as well, usually making the hero the most prominent figure in the spectacle. Marlowe,

for example, makes Tamburlaine first enter, "Leading Zenocrate, Techelles, Usumcasane, Agydas, Magnetes, Lords,and Soldiers, loaden with treasure." In Chapman's The Conspiracy of Charles, Duke of Byron (1605) the aspiring hero has a carpet unrolled before him and "Loud music" when he comes on in I, i. These heroes are characterized in other ways as well, but the spectacle at their entrances is not wasted.

Shakespeare does not neglect this useful technique, and employs it to help build up some heroes. Draper counts fifteen examples of what he calls the Grand Entry in Shakespeare's plays, though not all of these are used for hero build-up nor are all of them in the first act. Titus Andronicus makes an impressive first entrance, "bound with laurel boughs," bringing his son's coffin. He is at once characterized by this pageantry as a soldier who knows the cost as well as the glory of victory. Shakespeare does not appear to call for anything more than the usual royal entrance in King John, the same type of entrance that is left up to the stage-manager in countless Elizabethan plays. Holinshead's Chronicle, the main source for Henry V, records that Canterbury made a "pithie oration" in support of Henry's claim to France in the House of Commons. Shakespeare moves the scene to the Presence Chamber, and shows Henry surrounded by his court, with a Bishop and an Archbishop at his call, when he enters. The pomp of this first entrance is a reminder of the coronation scene at the end of Henry IV, Part Two, and is a confirmation of the fact that Henry is taking his office seriously.

Like Henry V, of whom it is said that "The air, a charter'd libertine, is still" (I, i, 48) when he speaks, the hero of another play also is accorded silence when he has something to say. "Peace, ho! Caesar speaks," is the cry when Julius Caesar enters in magnificent procession, heralded and accompanied by music, with "Antony, Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, and Casca; a great crowd following" (I, ii, 1 s. d.). At first sight, this man is the Caesar of legend, though Shakespeare at once proceeds to humanise him. Timon of Athens, like Caesar, makes the entrance of a great man. Walking on to the sound of blaring trumpets, he is seen among his suitors, lordly but gracious (I, i, 94). But the procession of which Antony is a part in his first entrance in Antony and Cleopatra is obviously designed to suggest the hero's "dotage" and degeneracy. Antony enters with the ceremony which might be accorded the triple pillar of the world, but the procession is made up of women and eunuchs. King Lear makes his initial appearance with great ceremony, announced by a sennet and preceded only by "one bearing a coronet." The stage-direction is clear about the order of the procession:" Enter one bearing a coronet, then King Lear, then the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall, next Goneril ..." (I, i, 34 s. d.). Shakespeare is probably trying to suggest the absoluteness of Lear's rule and the strength of his will. A comparison of this entrance with its equivalent in King Leir is inevitable. The old play has, "Enter King Leir and Nobles."

The brief but meaningful stage directions for the entrances of Lear and Antony are instances of Shakespeare's awareness that a royal

entrance can be used to suggest certain aspects of a noble hero's character. The manner of Henry V's first entrance seems to show that at this stage of his career Shakespeare was already using spectacle for a purpose -- in Henry V the purpose of confirming that the Henry of the Boar's Head tavern is gone for ever.

Henry VIII contains several magnificent entrances, but the first entrance of the king is a meaningful one. The stage direction for the king's entrance is explicit: "Cornets. Enter the King, leaning on the Cardinal's shoulder, the Nobles, and Sir Thomas Lovell; the Cardinal places himself under the King's feet on his right side." (I, ii, 1 s. d.). Comparison is invited with Rowley's Henry VIII play, which has, as shown above, a magnificent processional entrance when the king first comes on. In Rowley's play Wolsey's first entrance is also pompous: "Enter the Cardinall with the Embassadours of Fraunce, in all state and royaltie, the Purse and Mace before him" (sc. i, 1 s. d.). In Henry VIII only the purse is borne before Wolsey (a fact which is enough to show his power), but Wolsey's importance and the king's dependence upon him are clearly shown by the fact that Henry comes in "leaning on the Cardinal's shoulder." More, the act of leaning on Wolsey's shoulder may be an indication of the hero's trusting nature. The play goes on to show how Henry, when he decides to assert himself, needs no "prop."

While, as has been shown above, some dramatists rather casually stress the importance of their heroes with "Loud music," Shakespeare is quite methodical in this matter. One student of Shakespeare's

use of music has found that in his plays "Sennets ... announce royal or quasi-royal personages, and frequently mark exits and entrances. Flourishes are salutes to royalty ... ."[15] The audience could be counted upon to discriminate between the various sounds.

Processions have to come to an end, and royal entrances sometimes end, like the one in Henry VIII, with the arrangement of the characters into a kind of formal tableau, itself designed to remind the audience of the hero-king's importance. We know, of course, that on the mystery stages great personages are often placed higher than the common people, and in Everyman God, appearing in the upper part of the stage, can say,

> I perceyve, here in my maieste
> How that all creatures be to me unkynde.
> (ll. 22-3)

Some dramatists give explicit directions about the arrangement of the tableau, directions such as Peele's in Edward I that "the king sitteth in the middest mounted highest," or Shakespeare's that Wolsey is to sit "under the king's feet on his right side." And, of course, a throne is often as necessary to an Elizabethan hero-king as a crown to the folk-play King Alfred, a fact which Hieronimo confirms when, setting up his stage in The Spanish Tragedie, he calls, "Bring a chair and a cushion for the king." (IV, iii, 15-16).

Some great persons have impressive exits as well as entrances. In Shakespeare, Henry V (I, ii, 310 s. d.) and Lear (I, i, 269 s. d.) exit to flourishes; a sennet is sounded when Julius Caesar goes off

(I, ii, 24 s. d.; 214 s. d.).

It seems reasonable to conclude that hero build-up in the secular drama is sometimes partly accomplished through the use of grand processional entrances. The processional entrance is a common feature of the drama in the period under discussion, though not all processions have the hero as their chief figure (the grand entrance in I, ii of Hamlet glorifies Claudius, if anyone, though Hamlet, distinctively dressed, is certainly not lost in the crowd). I have shown examples of grand entrances in which a hero's prestige, at least, is indicated, and in which, in some cases, other aspects of a hero's character are suggested as well: Edward I's magnanimity, Henry V's attention to duty, Lear's dominance, Antony's enchanted and degraded state and, perhaps, Henry VIII's trusting nature. George Peele might be said to have known as well as Shakespeare what could be suggested as well as shown in a grand entrance, but Shakespeare has more examples of suggestive entrances and appears to know exactly what he wants as he writes the stage direction.

(2) Hero Build-up through Action.

A hero may be wholly or partly characterized by being shown in action. This action need not, in the first act, be the main action, but activity designed to indicate that he is great, good, brave, kind, or villainous. The grand entrance might even be called action or activity which shows the hero exalted and in command of a situation. A minor crisis may be presented in the first act, as in Othello, and

the hero characterized through his reaction to that crisis. Othello is characterized through his reaction to the threatened arrest as a man sure of his own rightness and equal to almost any situation.

Perhaps the prayers and devout attitudes of some of the heroes, and the curses of the hero-villains, outlined above in the discussion of Self-Characterization, can be counted as actions which indicate character. There is, however, no clear-cut use of character-revelation through action until the secular drama is well established. In The Life and Death of Jack Straw (pr. 1593) the titular hero's brawling and violent character is shown as soon as the play opens. He comes on to quarrel with a tax-collector, and after about twenty lines of heated argument kills him.[16] For the purpose of the plot, Straw's nature has been fully established. George A Green, in the play of which he is the hero (pr. 1599) is first seen defying a band of noble rebels. His middle-class loyalty and courage are his qualifications for being the hero of the play, and he at once demonstrates both.

Two plays, both published in 1600, use a simple technique of action and contrast to show the generosity and kindliness of their heroes. One is The Life of Sir John Oldcastle. Oldcastle is carefully prepared for in a Prologue, as mentioned above, and when he appears with Harpoole, his steward, some beggars are shown asking them for alms. Harpoole thrusts them away, but Oldcastle overrules him, sending the beggars into his house for a meal, much to Harpoole's disgust.[17] The incident is carefully designed to show Oldcastle's kindness, charity, and public-spiritedness, and to explain that his

near-poverty is an honourable predicament, for he has nearly beggared himself with giving alms. The kindly treatment of inferiors also helps to characterize Lacy, hero of Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday. Rafe Damport, an apprentice shoemaker, has been inducted into Lacy's regiment to fight in France, and Rafe's master, his friends, and his new wife come, in the first scene, to appeal to Lacy to have the apprentice released. Lacy cannot release him, but he treats them all -- even Firk, who addresses him as "Cormorant" instead of "Colonel" -- in a kindly manner:

> Lacie. Is thy name Raph?
> Rafe. Yes sir.
> Lacie. Give me thy hand,
> Thou shalt not want, as I am a gentleman:
> Woman, be patient, God (no doubt) will send
> Thy husband safe againe, but he must go,
> His countries quarrel sayes, it must be so.
> (I, i, 176-80)

Perhaps less-elaborate uses of this technique may be seen in Orlando's democratic confiding in the old retainer Adam at the beginning of As You Like It, and in the emphasising of Lear's imperiousness as he shouts for the servants to get his dinner ready in I, iv. It is, of course, a part of Coriolanus's character that he is "a very dog to the commonalty," and he quickly shows this trait when he meets the mob of citizens in I, i.

The idea of showing the hero's character through his treatment of inferiors may have been derived from Marlowe's Edward II (1593), in which Gaveston sneers at an old soldier's earnest request for service with him. Gaveston is not the hero of Edward II, of course,

but the idea is a good one for character-revelation. It is probably taken up again in Timon of Athens's kindness to his suitors.

As has been pointed out, the generosity and magnanimity of Edward I in Peele's play of that name are quickly established by his actions during his first entrance and just afterward when he generously rewards his troops. The action of Faustus, in picking up one book after another ("Where is Justinian? ... Jerome's Bible, Faustus, view it well") and rejecting each in turn until he comes to his book of spells helps to characterize him. When Guise enters in I, ii of The Massacre at Paris the audience has already been told that he is a villain, and when he calls almost at once for the apothecary and completes the transaction for the poisoned gloves this characterization is confirmed. It is a neat stroke to persuade the audience of Lear's imperiousness by making Gloucester, who heretofore has been seen relaxed and jesting, jump to attention and obey the king's peremptory command to "Attend the lords of France and Burgundy" (King Lear, I, i, 35). Henry V, when he first enters in Shakespeare's play, is gracious, but firmly in control of the situation, as shown by his immediate action in getting down to business. On the other hand, Antony's refusal to attend to important matters of state, or even to listen to news from Rome, is confirmation of his degeneracy.

But it is in reaction to a situation already existing that the hero's character may be most vividly shown, and Elizabethan dramatists seem to be well aware of this point. For example, the careful characterization of Gaveston in Edward II serves a useful purpose in

helping to characterize Edward as well. The audience is meant to conceive a distaste for Gaveston and his schemes, his social pretensions, his contemptuous treatment of the poor, and his plans which depend upon his success in gulling "the pliant king," as he calls Edward. Before very long it becomes evident that Edward must be judged on his reaction when he meets Gaveston, and when Edward enters, rejects his sober and loyal followers, and embraces Gaveston, the shallowness of the hero's nature is vividly revealed. Marlowe also sets up a situation and shows the hero through his reaction to that situation in The First Part of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine is seen keeping his head in the face of threatened destruction, and winning his enemy over to his side just as he has won Zenocrate. Shakespeare's Henry V is also partly characterized through his reaction to a threat, in Henry V, I, ii. It is roughly the same situation as that faced by King John (King John, I, i), and both these heroes keep their heads and react with firm determination and courtesy.

Of course, the initial actions of Henry and John are not so much preliminary indications of character as the first actions in a series of events, each more important than the last. But their mettle is shown by their first exploits. When Richard II is presented with a difficult situation, in Richard II, I, i, he vacillates, and his character is partly revealed by the display of wavering. Shakespeare is adept at showing a hero's character through his reactions, however slight. A good example is Macbeth's musing on the witches' prophecy, in the asides beginning, "Two truths are told ..." (I, iii,

127-42). Latent ambition is shown rising to the surface at the prompting of certain events. As mentioned before, the way in which Coriolanus handles the mob of citizens at his first appearance is almost a complete characterization in itself. So is Hotspur's rashness in braving his king. Othello, when he is threatened with arrest, remains calm and dignified; forced to justify himself, he does so eloquently.

I have here touched upon only the most obvious examples of characterization through action. It has been argued, for example, that practically all the action of Hamlet is designed to unfold the hero's whole character.[18] But all the heroes mentioned under the present heading, "Characterization through action," are at least partly characterized through their actions or reactions in the first acts of the plays in which they appear. Action is an interesting method of exposition, and often can be used to indicate a hero's character as explicitly as, and more entertainingly than, a verbal explanation.

One more type of characterization through action may be mentioned. After the success of The Spanish Tragedie, it was easy for dramatists to characterize a hero as a revenger. The first action of the hero of Hoffman characterizes him as a stereotyped revenger. He walks on-stage and "strikes open a curtaine where appeares a body," and the audience knows at once that he is a mortally-wronged man whose driving obsession is revenge.[19]

(3) Hero Build-up through Precedence in Speaking.

I now have to discuss the use in hero build-up of a theatrical convention which is observable in the mystery plays and in almost all the extant plays to the death of Shakespeare. This is the convention that kings in their courts, leaders in front of their followers, and masters with their servants usually assert their superiority by taking precedence in speaking. It may seem a minor point, and yet a surprisingly large number of heroes -- when the hero is a man of high position -- are made to show their superiority, or perhaps their qualities of leadership, by initiating conversations when they appear with their followers or their trains. Whether the usage developed out of the mysteries, or whether it is a simple reflection of the way in which dramatists throughout our period believed that leader-heroes ought to act, there are many instances of the hero beginning to speak first, while those with him stand silently until he has finished. Often the hero may say only one word when he appears, as in Julius Caesar (I, ii, i), but even one word from him is enough to show his authority.

In the mysteries, for example, God is never preceded in speaking, nor is Christ when He comes to the centre of the stage, except in those pageants where He is a prisoner. When Herod or Pilate are villain-heroes of plays, they always assert their brief authority by taking precedence in speaking, except in only one case, the nineteenth of the Ludus Coventriae, where a messenger speaks to Herod before the latter delivers his traditional rant. Jesus has precedence among His

disciples, and confirmation of the authors' consciousness of the relative importance of people on stage is given in the Chester "Emission of the Holy Ghost" and the York "Incredulity of Thomas," both of which show Peter, now the leader of Christ's disciples, emphasising his new importance by taking precedence in speaking. The mystery plays could, I believe, have accustomed audiences to the idea that the most important person usually speaks first, and to the corollary idea that the man who speaks first is the most important person on stage. Precedence in speaking is, in short, another way of emphasising a character's importance.

Gorboduc takes precedence when he enters with his court. So does Jocasta when she enters with her train in the Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh play of which she is the titular heroine,[20] and in Cambises the hero speaks before all others.[21] In Lyly's Alexander And Campaspe two witty gentlemen give the exposition in dialogue while Alexander is entering and proceeding to his throne. When Alexander is formally seated he begins to speak,[22] just as Alonso, the hero of Dekker's If This be not a Good Play, immediately takes command and addresses his courtiers when he is seated on his throne. Perhaps to show that by about 1590 at least one dramatist was observing a careful gradation in the order of speaking, The First Part of Richard II may be cited. As this play begins, there is an exciting entrance ("hastely at several doores") of the Dukes of Lancaster and York, the Earls of Arundel and Surrey, and Sir Thomas Cheney, all of whom rush about the stage with knives and torches.

In spite of their excitement they speak in order of their importance: first Lancaster, then York, then Arundel, then Cheney. Surrey is unexplainably silent. Richard II is first to speak when he enters in procession.

Since this consciousness of order in speaking existed, it could be used to help to characterize a hero, and set him apart from other people on the stage. The carefully-observed order of speaking in the mysteries and many later plays seems to have this purpose.

Even if there was only casualness before, there is a pattern in the plays of Marlowe. When Tamburlaine is with his followers, no one speaks before him. Edward II is never preceded in speaking for four acts. Between I, i and IV, v, Edward makes ten entrances, speaking first on each occasion. When the rebellion begins and his grip on the crown starts to slacken, the king's fading power seems to be indicated by the fact that he is no longer allowed to speak first. In IV, v, he enters with Baldock and Young Spencer, "flying about the stage," and Spencer has the first lines. By the opening of IV, vi, Edward has been forced into hiding in the Abbey of Neath, and is no longer the real head of the state. He is now even preceded in the order of names in the stage direction: "Enter the Abbot, monks, Edward, Young Spencer, and Baldock." Here the Abbot -- master in this place -- speaks before Edward. At the opening of the next scene, V, i, Edward is the prisoner of Leicester, who speaks first. In this scene he gives up the crown, and when he next appears, in V, iii, with less gentle captors, the stage direction reads: "Enter Matrevis

and Gurney with the King," and Matrevis speaks first. The hero's decline in political importance is therefore marked by his supercession in the order of speaking, first by his friends, then his enemy, then his murderer, and the order of speaking is too carefully observed in this play to be accidental.

In The First Part of Henry VI, in which Shakespeare is generally believed to have collaborated with Marlowe, this equating of prestige with the character's position in the order of speaking is again noticeable. The hero does not appear until II, i, and though he comes on at the head of a magnificent procession sixty-four lines are spoken before he is allowed -- by the dramatist and by other characters -- to say a word. The king's youth and weakness are underlined by this supercession in the order of speaking. Henry VI again leads on his court in a grand entrance at the beginning of The Second Part of Henry VI, but he is again made to sit listening while Suffolk speaks sixteen lines. In The Third Part of Henry VI, Henry is older and stronger, and takes the initiative upon first appearing at I, i, 49, but he does not do so consistently -- the Queen, for example, forestalls him in II, ii, after a ceremonial entrance. But Edward, afterward Edward IV, always asserts his character by speaking as soon as he enters, and the last scene of The Third Part of Henry VI shows him in the throne room of the palace in London, asserting, in a manner not unlike that of the boastful Herod of the mysteries, that he has won his seat by strength. The fact that the King of France invariably takes the initiative at his entrances also accentuates Henry's weakness.

I have gone beyond my set limits in the last paragraph, citing examples from late as well as early acts in order to show that in three plays which are among Shakespeare's earliest can be seen operating the idea that a hero's strength of character may partly be indicated by the way in which he asserts or fails to assert himself in conversation with his inferiors. Shakespeare's King John does not allow himself to be preceded in the order of speaking, nor do Henry IV, Henry V, or even Richard II when he is king. The latter is not as strong as Henry IV, but has nevertheless a petulant kind of strength, and an eye that is said to "[lighten] forth controlling majesty" (III, iii, 62-70). To illustrate Shakespeare's equating of order in speaking with royal power, it might be pointed out that Richard II has ten royal entrances and on each occasion the king (either Richard or Henry IV) is the initial speaker; King John has fourteen entrances of kings or princes, each of whom speaks first; Henry V has eleven, and the rule holds good in every case.

Confining my survey to first acts; when Titus Andronicus makes his impressive first entrance even the high-born pretenders, Saturninus and Bassanius, are silent while he speaks. Since Richard III makes his first entrance solus he gains no prestige through being the first in a group to speak, but when he enters with Hastings and Dorset at I, iii, 41, he is already speaking or begins to speak first. The importance of Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream is emphasised when, in his palace, he opens the play. In Twelfth Night, Orsino, as hero and head of the household, is the most important

person on stage as the play opens, and he speaks first. Lear is found in the first act to be the initial speaker after his entrances. No one would dare to speak before him.

It has been said that Queen Margaret often takes the initiative in speaking in the Henry VI plays. What may be a development of this idea takes place in Antony and Cleopatra. When the hero and heroine first enter, Cleopatra is speaking, Antony listening. Antony enters twice more in Act One, at I,ii, 90, and I, iii, 12, and on each occasion he waits his turn to speak. In fact, on the last occasion he is interrupted by Cleopatra after speaking one line (I, iii, 14) and has to beg to be allowed to explain himself. At Cleopatra's court Antony is indeed a bewitched man. It should also be pointed out that when Othello first appears he is seen listening to Iago talk about the "stuff o' th' conscience" (I, ii, 1f.), and Iago later comes to dominate the hero. Of course, Shakespeare has by now mastered the technique of starting a conversation off-stage, and there may be no significance in the fact that Cleopatra and Iago happen to be talking as the heroes first appear. Still, Caesar never speaks before Antony when they appear together in Antony and Cleopatra.

Lord Timon in his court the first time he appears (I, i), Cymbeline on every occasion that he enters in state, Henry VIII when he first enters his council chamber (I, ii) -- all are the first to speak.

It may be asked, had Shakespeare ever seen a royal court, or

did he get his ideas of what a court looked like and how it was conducted from the stage? If he got his ideas from the stage, it is possible that he learned them from Marlowe, or from the conventional way of opening court scenes in the mediaeval plays. Wherever he got his ideas, it seems safe to say that he often emphasises the importance of a noble hero by showing him speaking first while others listen respectfully or rush to obey his orders. The technique cannot always be used -- it is not feasible in the first court scene in Hamlet, for instance, for here it is not the hero's power which is to be emphasised at the beginning[23] -- but Shakespeare uses it often as a small aid in hero build-up.

While Shakespeare was employing this technique, other dramatists of his age also were using it. Peele makes Edward I, hero of the play of that name, speak at once when he enters, and again initiate the dialogue after the magnificent procession is over and the tableau formed around the throne (l. 46; l. 131). In A Knack to Know a Knave, King Edgar, the hero, entering with Dunstan, takes precedence in speaking.[24] Byron, hero of Chapman's Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron (1605), does the same thing when he first appears with his friends in I, i of this sequel to The Conspiracy of Byron. The Scottish History of James the Fourth opens in the Scottish court, and the hero, meeting the king of England, speaks first. Here James may be speaking first partly to show that he is on his own ground, partly because he is the titular hero. After the splendid entrance of Queen Elizabeth, heroine of If You Know Not Me, the Queen exercises

her royal prerogative by starting the dialogue. So do Charlemagne, hero of the anonymous play of that name, Henry VIII, hero of When You See Me You Know Me, and Tiberius in The Tragedy of Tiberius (1607),[25] after they have made processional entrances. Both the titular heroine, the Empress of Babylon, and the actual heroine, Titania, in Dekker's The Whore of Babylon, speak first when they enter with their respective trains.

The heroes and heroines just listed are partly characterized by the fact that among other people on stage they speak first. They are, I believe, made to seem more important because they do so. In Elizabethan drama, it seems to be more surprising that a hero, when he is a king, general, duke, or other exalted personage, does not speak first than that he does. Precedence in speaking is as conventional a sign of importance as a crown or a gold chain. It may seem an obvious and minor way of emphasizing a hero's importance, but its widespread use enables Marlowe to suggest the decline in Edward II's power by moving the hero lower in the order of speaking as the play progresses. Shakespeare can suggest a hero's degradation, or his impending domination, by breaking the usual order of speaking.

(4) Conclusion.

A grand entrance may be used to suggest a hero's magnificence and high estate. I have shown examples of entrances used, with varying effectiveness, for this purpose. A hero may also be characterized by his actions just after he comes on. He may be presented

in action which has little to do with the main plot, but which shows an admirable side of his nature, or he may be shown as capable of acting decisively in a certain situation. Shakespeare, for example, likes to show his kings and noble heroes asserting their authority, and he first characterizes Othello as being courageous and self-possessed in an emergency. Precedence in speaking is related to hero build-up through action, for the hero's strength of will or his control of others may be suggested by his assertion of himself in conversation. Marlowe and Shakespeare handle this technique suggestively.

Footnotes: Chapter V

[1] John W. Draper, "Shakespeare's Use of the Grand Entry," Neophilologus, (April 1960), pp. 128-35.

[2] Supra, p. 11.

[3] Cambises, in Specimens, II, p. 162.

[4] Richard II, ed. W. P. Frijlinck, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1929) l. 350 s. d.

[5] Dodsley, VII.

[6] When You See Me, ed. F. P. Wilson, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1952).

[7] If You Know Not Me, ed. Madeleine Doran, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1934), l. 42 s. d.

[8] 1612 is the earliest date given for The Tragedy of Chabot. This date is tentatively put forward by Peter Ure in The Age of Shakespeare, ed. Boris Ford (London, 1955), II, p. 323 n. E. K. Chambers (The Elizabethan Stage, III, p. 259), gives the date as "c. 1613."

[9] Chapman, The Tragedy of Chabot, in Three Centuries of Drama.

[10] Peele, Edward I, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911), l. 45 s. d.

[11] Ibid., l. 116 s. d.

[12] Ibid., l. 130 s. d.

[13] Caesar's Revenge, ed. F. S. Boas, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911).

[14] Charlemagne, ed. J. H. Walter, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1937). The date is the editor's conjecture.

[15] C. L. Lambertson, Shakespeare's Use of Music as a Dramatic Device. Unpublished dissertation (University of Alberta, 1941), pp. 136-7.

[16] Dodsley, V, pp. 379-80.

[17] Sir John Oldcastle, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1912), I, iii,350-410.

[18] Harley Granville-Barker, "Shakespeare's Dramatic Art," in A Companion to Shakespeare Studies, ed. H. Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 45-87.

[19] Henry Chettle, The Tragedy of Hoffman, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1950).

[20] George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh, Jocasta, in Early English Classical Tragedies, ed. J. W. Cunliffe (Oxford, 1912).

[21] Dodsley, IV.

[22] Specimens, II, p. 279.

[23] It should, however, be remembered that a feeling of "wrongness" has been established at the beginning of the previous scene, when the intruder, not the sentry, makes the challenge. There may be a suggestion that in I, ii it is again the wrong man who speaks first.

[24] Dodsley, X

[25] The Tragedy of Tiberius, ed. W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1914).

Chapter VI

WASTED HERO BUILD-UP

The audience is entitled to see the hero act consistently with the character given him in the first act. Henry V, in Shakespeare's play, is fulsomely built up by the prelates in the first act as one who can discourse eloquently on any subject, a man who, when he speaks, stills the very air (I, i, 38-50). Therefore, when in Act Five Henry becomes a rough, gruff fellow who cannot gasp out his eloquence and who has only downright oaths (V, ii, 137 f.), the audience is entitled to suspect that here is a new hero. The fulsome build-up at the start of the play is not really misleading as far as the hero of the first four acts is concerned. Henry is, of course, glorified where he might better be commended, but Shakespeare is dealing, not too surely, with a national hero. In humanizing Henry in Act Five, he has to contradict a good deal of the hero build-up done in Act One.

I can find only one other reversal of character of roughly this kind, and it is an explainable one. In Marston's The Malcontent, the hero's character as a malcontent is indicated by his name, Malevole, and suggested by "the vilest out of tune music" which he plays before and during the first forty lines. He is heard shouting incoherent nothings from his chamber, and is described by Pietro as "one of the most prodigious affections that ever conversed with nature; a man,

or rather a monster, more discontent than Lucifer when he was thrust out of the presence" (I, i, 27-9). Pietro adds what he believes to be the scientific reason for Malevole's condition: "The elements struggle within him; his own soul is at variance with herself" (I, i, 35-6). At his entrance the hero talks to Pietro in language reminiscent of Lear's most misanthropic utterances. In all, he is prepared for, described, and self-revealed as a misanthropic, discontented, half-mad cynic, but when he is alone with a trusted servant his speech suddenly changes from prose to verse and from oaths to polite speech, and he reveals that the whole character of the malcontent is his revenger's disguise. The build-up of the malcontent character can be justified. It leads to the surprise, and as Malevole explains that he is not a malcontent after all, he can present the exposition in an interesting way. But still, the malcontent character is so thoroughly built up, so detailed and so strikingly conveyed, that the hero's real self seems rather pale when compared to it. Marston has made the hero's false character more vivid than his real one.

Another type of wasted build-up occurs when the techniques generally reserved for building up the hero are lavished upon someone other than the most important person in the play. Henry V is a fatal name for Shakespeare in this matter of hero build-up. Characterized over-exuberantly in Henry V, this king also receives the most elaborate build-up of anyone in the Henry VI plays. The First Part of Henry VI opens with Henry V's funeral, and Bedford, Gloucester, and

Winchester take turns in speaking lavish praise of the dead king. The Henry VI plays are about a political situation rather than about a person, of course, and it could also be argued that the reminder of Henry V's greatness is a good way of underlining Henry VI's weakness, so that the latter is characterized by contrast. But I suspect that the eulogies on the dead king are inserted as audience pleasers, not as deliberately indirect characterization of Henry VI.

I can find no other play in which there is so much concentration of hero build-up upon a person who does not appear, except the "classical" Birth of Hercules (c. 1590), thought to be by Martin Slaughter.[1] This play has five acts of preparation for Hercules, who is born at the very end. Hercules is the character in whom everyone on stage is interested, but he never appears. It is little wonder, therefore, that its editor, R. W. Bond, comments that, "The play ... is manifestly of academic origin and can have had no connection with the public stage."

In Daniel's Cleopatra[2] the heroine has a long, ranting speech to open the play in which, mourning for Antony, she praises him at some length. But this praise of Antony as "the Atlas and the Champion of my pride," is mainly an indication of Cleopatra's own bereaved condition, and is not unlike Hamlet's praise of his dead father (Hamlet, I, ii, 187-8). Marston, that surpriser of audiences, sets out in What You Will (pr. 1607) to build up a supposed dead man. Andolfo is highly praised by his brothers, who are mourning his

reported death by drowning.[3] Andolfo is given a most admirable character, and soon the audience has cause to remember all the fine things which are said of him as he turns up alive.

If Shakespeare wasted hero build-up in The First Part of Henry VI, he did not make the same mistake again. All's Well that Ends Well also begins with the entrance of a group of people in deep mourning. But though her dead husband is in the Countess of Rousillon's thoughts, no time is wasted in saying anything about the late Count. Shakespeare gets down to the business of characterizing Bertram and Helena, and giving the exposition. The gallantry of the rebellious, and dead, Cawdor is described in Macbeth (I, iv, 3-11) only to illustrate that bravery and treason can go together, as they do in the hero.

Shakespeare's consciousness in his late career of the adequacy of the build-up for a hero may be illustrated with reference to Twelfth Night. Orsino is briefly but completely characterized in the first two brief scenes of Act One. In I, i he is presented as a noble but very love-sick gentleman. His high station is suggested by the fact that musicians attend him in his home while gentleman attendants hover around trying to divert him with aristocratic pleasures -- "Will you go hunt, my lord?" His sensitivity to the music -- "That strain again! It had a dying fall" -- and his groans for Olivia show him far sunk into love-melancholy. But the audience, for all Orsino's foolishness here and later in the play, is meant to remember Orsino's nobility, which is underlined in the succinct

statement of the Captain in I, ii, that Orsino is "A noble duke, in nature as in name," a statement which comes from one of Shakespeare's unnamed and therefore truth-speaking characters. The playwright then proceeds to characterize many other people. Olivia is very extensively built up, as Orsino praises her beauty (I, i, 19-23) and her heart (I, i, 33-9), Valentine her determination (I, i, 24-32), and the Captain her virtue (I, ii, 30-40). Her sensible ideas about running a household are suggested by her objections to the dissipations of Belch and Aguecheek. The Captain is characterized by Viola (I, ii, 46-51), Viola is described by Orsino (I, iv, 30-4), and even Aguecheek gets roughly twenty-five lines of characterization (I, iii, 14-46).

Shakespeare seems to have been worried that, since the characterization of Orsino as a noble man is so brief, and his foolishness in love so great, the audience might forget Orsino's worth. And so in the fifth act, when he is to win Viola, Orsino is given the speech in which he recognizes Antonio as one whom he has seen <u>face to face</u> in the smoke of war (V, i, 54-62). In other words, more characterization of the hero -- as a soldier who can be found in the most dangerous places -- is introduced late in the play, not to change the hero's character, but to re-affirm it. The hero build-up for Orsino in Act One is not inadequate, but might be forgotten in the wealth of characterization given to others in the play, a fact which Shakespeare seems to recognize.

Footnotes: Chapter VI

[1] The Birth of Hercules, ed. R. W. Bond, Malone Soc. Reprints (Oxford, 1911). Introd. p. v.

[2] Samuel Daniel, Cleopatra, in Three Centuries of Drama, I.

[3] I, i, 131-155.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this study it has been seen that dramatists could depend upon certain knowledge, attitudes, or feelings on the part of their audiences, and that many of them took advantage of these things when characterizing heroes. In some of the latest plays of the period studied, heroes can be found who are characterized by the simplest and oldest technique of all, that of having them speak directly to the audience in the "I am ..." formula. However, as has been seen, dramatists began, early in the "professional" era, to invent pretexts to make self-characterization natural. The "I am ..." formula, usually spoken to other characters or in soliloquy, persists in the professional drama, but only the simplest heroes, such as Richard III, characterize themselves completely, and the use of the formula in the self-description of Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play is charged with irony.

From a study of the characterization of the hero by other persons in the play it has been seen that certain character-types were considered to be especially effective as vehicles for hero build-up. The dramatists' recognition of the effectiveness of these character-types in hero build-up is shown by the extensive use made of kings, nobles, old people, and beautiful heroines for the purpose. Up to Macbeth, kings in the English drama are always correct when they describe a hero's character. But Shakespeare causes Duncan to be wrong in his estimate of Macbeth, giving, for the purpose of

dramatic irony, a new twist to an old idea.

It has been shown that prologues, costumes, variations in speech, the hero's appearance, and the device of contrast are widely used in hero-characterization. Many playwrights of the period, following popular taste and depending upon audience knowledge, characterize their heroes as braggarts, lovers, or revengers. Use of the supposedly-popular concept of the Machiavel for hero-characterization has been found in only one play. Sometimes the hero's name is meant to reveal his whole character, a simple idea which could have come from the morality-play practice. The grand entrance is a frequently-employed characterizing device, generally employed in a mechanical fashion, but used with subtlety by Peele and Shakespeare. The hero's importance is often demonstrated by the simple fact that he speaks first in a group, and Marlowe and Shakespeare use this convention in an interesting and suggestive way. My discussion of hero build-up through action has been limited to some rather obvious examples -- it is almost impossible to estimate the effect upon an audience of what a character does --, and I have confined myself to those cases where the dramatist clearly intends a certain effect and works for it in a certain way.

To study the techniques of hero-characterization used in this era is to see dramatists come to, and master, the problem of presenting heroes, not as symbols, personified abstractions, or types, but as human beings. At the end of the period studied herein there are still plays, like William Alexander's Croesus, in which the

mechanicalness of the characterization of the hero is an index of the unoriginality and woodenness of the play itself. But there are also many plays which are absorbing, true to life, and capable of involving an audience in the action. To a great extent, interest and immediacy are gained through involving the audience in the fortunes of the hero -- making them sympathize with him and care about him. The interest taken by an audience in a hero who simply tells them, "I am King Alfred," depends mainly upon their mood at that moment. But great dramatists, while they use audience knowledge, piety, patriotism, or prejudice, also instil certain moods in their audiences. When a certain hero is heard being reviled in his absence, is seen acting courageously, is heard telling, on an appropriate occasion, his adventures, is seen being commended by the Venetian Senate, is chosen by a beautiful woman and praised on all sides -- even by his enemy, he is a man in whom the audience is forced to be interested. All the devices just outlined force the audience to take an interest in and admire Othello, and all of them are techniques of hero build-up. Hero presentation can, therefore,be accomplished mechanically, as it often is accomplished from the folk-plays to Croesus, or with great artistry, as in Othello. I have attempted to show some of the stages of development which lie between these extremes. Shakespeare, while he did not avoid the easy and topical ways of characterizing his heroes, often modifies these easy methods in telling ways. His heroes are more than puppets given brief life through the use of

mechanical devices of characterization.

None of the methods of hero-characterization discussed in this study simply disappeared as new techniques came into being. New ideas are quickly seized upon by playwrights, but old ones persist, as I have tried to show by tracing techniques through the period under discussion. Progress is by no means steady and uninterrupted. Hero-characterization is a task which all dramatists face, and many of the techniques outlined in this study are still in use in the modern theatre.

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